



CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

Norco Industries Boosts IT Infrastructure with US Signal



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“ Throughout this whole endeavor we’ve felt that the people at US Signal we interacted with were listening to us. That’s key. ”



Norco Industries, a US-based manufacturer, serves numerous industries with its ADNIK®, BAL®, NORCO® LIFTING EQUIPMENT, FLO-DYNAMICS®, NORTOOL™, NORCOAT™, and FREEDOM INDUSTRIAL HYDRAULICS brands. The company is headquartered in California and has manufacturing facilities in Indiana.

HIGHLIGHTS

Challenges

- Outdated IT equipment
- Expiring warranties for on-premise servers
- Shifting IT model
- Tight deadlines
- Need to accelerate digital transformation (DX)
- Need to transform IT into a business asset instead of a cost center

Challenges

Outdated IT equipment, expiring warranties and the need to accelerate digital transformation (DX) were driving the need for change.

From AI to autonomous robots, advanced technologies are transforming all aspects of manufacturing. But to leverage them, manufacturers require the right IT infrastructure. That was among the challenges faced by Norco Industries.

Much of the company's on-premise equipment was old and ill-suited to the demands of many of the technologies associated with DX. Extensive internal resources were required to keep the equipment running. Warranties were expiring. Upgrades were needed.

A new CIO was brought in with the mandate to drive the company's DX journey. The time was right for change — particularly in terms of IT assets, but it would require a balancing act between cost savings and modernization.

The decision was made to bring some previously outsourced services in-house, enabling the IT team to act as its own managed service provider (MSP). Doing so freed up budget dollars that could be used to move some of the company's more labor-intensive, expensive-to-upgrade IT assets offsite to a hosted private cloud.

The cloud would provide greater flexibility and scalability with on-demand, pay-as-you-go resources, as well as the ability to support more advanced technologies. It would free up the internal IT team to focus on strategic initiatives instead of IT equipment operations and maintenance. There was also the potential for the migration to the cloud to generate cost benefits as capital expenses for equipment purchases and upgrades would be replaced by more predictable operating expenses.



Solution

- Single-tenant Cloud (Hosted Private Cloud)
- Multi-tenant Cloud
- Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS)
- MPLS
- Dedicated Internet Access (DIA)
- Managed Firewall
- Managed Extended Detection and Response (XDR)
- Remote Monitoring and Management (RMM)
- Backup as a Service (BaaS)
- Advanced Email Security

Results

- Ability to run critical IT systems three shifts daily with zero downtime
- Increased productivity
- Freed up internal IT resources
- IT can now think more strategically and be predictive instead of reactive
- Better support for digital transformation efforts

Nonetheless, the changes presented concerns. The IT team would have to adjust to no longer having their primary IT infrastructure onsite. With a change in vendors and equipment warranties expiring, it was imperative to quickly implement any new infrastructure solutions quickly to avoid potential business disruptions.

The Norco Industries team also knew that it would take more than migrating to the cloud to support its DX initiatives. Connectivity services were needed as well. So were DR and backup services.

Finding an IT service provider that could deliver everything Norco Industries needed was going to be a challenge on its own. But DX is an ongoing process, so the company required more than a vendor that could provide a list of products. It needed a partner that could help it lay the foundation for DX and accompany it on its DX journey.

With the company's manufacturing facilities in Indiana and many of its DX efforts to take place on the manufacturing floor, choosing a partner close by was desirable too. In addition, the CIO hoped to eventually move everything offsite to a data center. That further supported the need for a nearby partner — one well positioned to support Norco Industries' future plans and goals.

“ US Signal has a large fiber infrastructure presence all throughout this area. In fact, they have dark fiber right on the same block as where our plants are. It was very easy to entertain that as the solution for connectivity. ”



“ Relationship is key. US Signal is going to evolve, and we’re going to evolve. I think we’ll evolve together as a team. ”

Solution

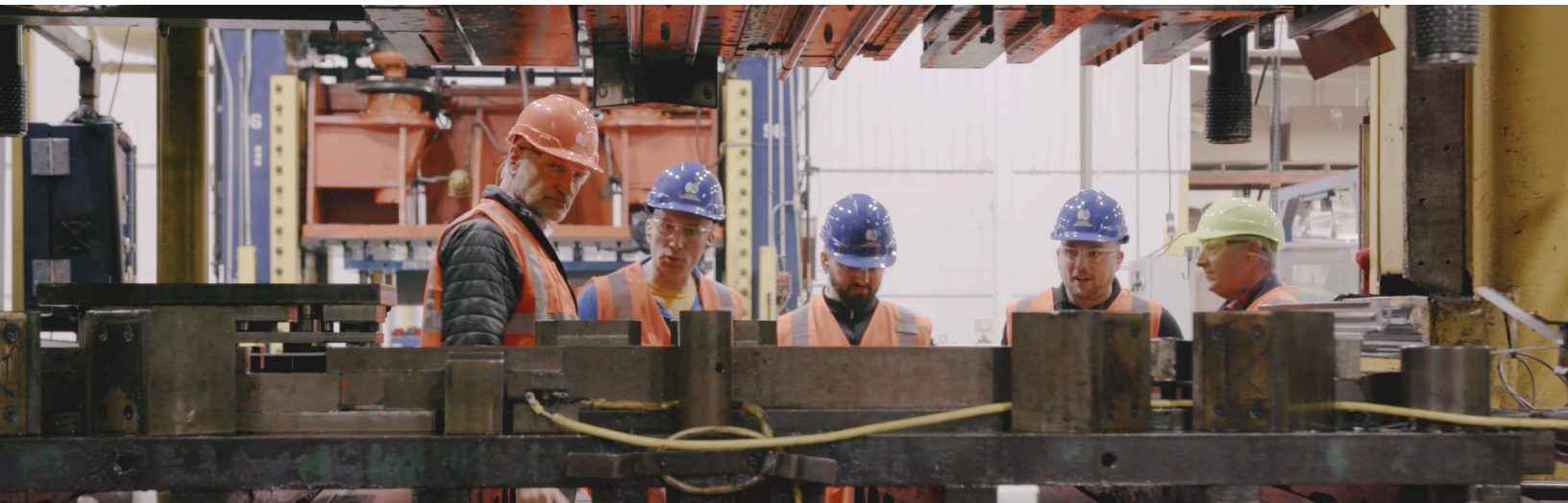
After interviewing different prospects, Norco Industries chose to go with US Signal. With its privately owned, robust network and secure network services, US Signal could meet the company’s connectivity needs. It had the single-tenant private cloud services the company wanted, a managed DR solution, security services, SSAE 18-audited data centers throughout the Midwest and a continually evolving portfolio of products and services. It also helped that members of the Norco Industries team were able to tour a US Signal data center.

According to Norco Industries’ CIO, “It was important for key people in our organization to see that US Signal is truly a good data center operator and knows what it’s doing. And because we would be moving from on-premise infrastructure to third-party provider, the site visit also helped our people understand where their data would be.”

However, the next steps weren’t a matter of Norco Industries simply picking and choosing from a portfolio of products. US Signal’s representatives met with the Norco Industries team, and listened to them as they talked about their needs, goals and future plans — including their DX journey. Various scenarios and “what ifs” were discussed. Ideas were exchanged. Options were presented.

The end result: US Signal architected a customized, multi-faceted solution that could meet Norco Industries’ current needs and provide the flexibility to accommodate future needs.

Norco Industries would have access to leading-edge technologies and equipment to help support its daily operations, as well as many of its DX initiatives, without the associated infrastructure and licensing investments. Because the services would be managed by US Signal, the Norco Industries IT team would have more time to focus on strategic endeavors, including DX.



“ US Signal, throughout this whole journey, has been very accommodating of our requirements. Now we have a full solution from one vendor that makes a lot of sense and is very cost effective. ”

Results

In the words of Norco Industries' CIO, “when all was said and done, US Signal more than exceeded our expectations.”

US Signal delivered on the expected “woulds” and “coulds.” The project was implemented on time and on budget with “no curveballs.”

The IT team no longer has to spend time maintaining and upgrading on-premise servers. Internal IT resources have been freed up so more attention can be given to DX and other strategic endeavors, including exploring the use of AI and robotic process automation to increase productivity.

According to the company's CIO, however, the most significant return on investment thus far has been the company's ability to keep its critical IT systems

fully productive over three shifts every day with no downtime. He also noted that the company is in a good place for DX, stating “We're in the very early stages of developing and implementing AI and other DX components. But there's great peace of mind knowing we can continue these pursuits because US Signal has our back.

“ US Signal's services are keeping our infrastructure up and running. I can sleep well at night knowing that if there's a failure, I've got a backup. If my site goes down, I've got DR. We've tested it. It works. ”





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US Signal is a Midwest-based digital infrastructure company. Founded in 2001, US Signal is a leading IT solutions provider powered by a wholly owned and operated fiber network, which helps businesses optimize resources through the provision of network, data center, cloud, data protection, and security solutions, as well as managed and professional IT services.