



Customer Case Study

Keeping the Municipal Enterprise Up and Running



City of Minneapolis



Minneapolis is the largest municipality in Minnesota with more than 400,000 residents, forming half of the Twin Cities with the neighboring state capital, St. Paul. Minneapolis serves as a center of commerce for the region, including support for a large agricultural region with food processing, as well as manufacturing, computing and health services. In fact, 15 Fortune 500 companies maintain corporate headquarters in Minneapolis. Running the city's infrastructure requires a complex enterprise network with customized software for each government department and agency.

Highlights

Challenges

- Aging infrastructure and need for modernization.
- Limited internal resources to manage IT transition.
- Strict 10-month implementation timeline for migration.
- Lack of visibility into existing systems before transition.

Challenges

- Aging infrastructure**
- Lack of internal resources**
- Lack of visibility prior to the transition**
- Strict 10-month implementation timeline**

The City of Minneapolis had been working with their previous IT outsourcing partner for 13 years and desired to find a new managed services and outsourced IT partner to manage the City's IT infrastructure. In addition, the existing network infrastructure was aging, and the City needed an experienced IT services partner to provide cloud and managed services that encompassed server, storage, network, security, database, OS and data protection services. After issuing a comprehensive RFP for outsourced IT services, the City of Minneapolis selected US Signal out of a field of 18 prospective partners to handle this comprehensive list of services.

The City chose US Signal because of the company's track record in dealing with large customers making complex transitions, as well as the projected cost savings, experience-backed Service Level Agreements (SLAs), flexibility and extensive cloud services. In signing the contract with US Signal, Otto Doll, CIO for Minneapolis, said, "Their ability to meet our objective for fast, flexible provisioning of services is only one of the reasons why the City selected US Signal."

US Signal also has strong company roots in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area following the acquisition of a local IT company by US Signal's parent company, Telephone and Data Systems, Inc. (TDS). US Signal has 65 employees based in the Minneapolis area and the ability to deliver a variety of hybrid IT solutions including colocation, managed services, hosted services and cloud computing.

After signing the multi-million dollar, five-year contract with the City, it was up to the US Signal team to demonstrate they could do the job and implement a successful transition in less than 10 months.

Solutions

Solution

- US Signal provided comprehensive hybrid IT services for server, storage, network, and cloud solutions.
- Migrated data and workloads to ReliaCloud infrastructure, supporting 250+ servers and 180 terabytes.
- Managed services for 70 locations and 3,500 users, including network equipment and security.

Results

- Phase 1 completed on time and within budget, with some systems ahead of schedule.
- Scaled capacity to accommodate 70 locations and 3,500 users with seamless disaster recovery and cloud services.
- Projected \$3M in annual savings and ongoing flexibility for future upgrades and applications.

Because of US Signal's comprehensive hybrid IT service offerings, US Signal had all of the resources needed to manage the City of Minneapolis' computing infrastructure. As part of the contract, US Signal would provide colocation services leveraging US Signal's national footprint of concurrently maintainable data centers it owns and operates. One data center was to host the City's production application environment, while disaster recovery for mission-critical and business-critical applications would be supported from another US Signal data center.

US Signal also was able to bring all the expertise required to maintain enterprise operations, including managed services for networking equipment such as routers, switches and firewalls across 70 locations. Data hosting using US Signal's ReliaCloud® infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS) platform was able to support more than 250 servers with 180 terabytes of data, including dedicated servers for non-virtualized assets. The US Signal team also brought the expertise to transition and upgrade critical components the City's PeopleSoft environment to support human resources and finance. Migration included transitioning and supporting hundreds of applications for specific city services, such as waste management, land management, parks and recreation and more.

Like any IT transformation, there were bumps along the way that the City and US Signal worked through together. Since the existing contract was still in place when the new contract was signed, the US Signal team was unable to gain access to the computing environment prior to the hand-off. There was no way to perform an initial assessment. However, when the contract did expire, US Signal was able to work with the installed systems and initiate the migration without any real problems.



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Part of the reason for the success was the ongoing communications between the US Signal team and the City’s IT team. From the first day the contract was signed, the City demonstrated their eagerness to forge a partnership and committed their time and resources to the project. To ensure success, the US Signal project team and the City’s IT group met twice each day to plan and assess progress.

As the US Signal team moved through each phase of the project, they encountered a few surprises. For example, they discovered that most of the installed enterprise systems were at the end of their lifespan. There was no alternative but to take the outdated systems and make sure they continued to work; letting the system go down was not an option.

The biggest surprise came with the implementation of the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS). Before work could begin on the CJIS project, the entire US Signal Operational

Support team, more than 100 professionals, had to be screened for security clearance, including fingerprinting and background checks. However, US Signal worked closely with the City to satisfy all of the City’s security and compliance requirements, even though it impacted progress on the overall transition project with the City.

User Environment

- Networking equipment in 70 locations
- 4,700 users

Technical Environment

- 250 servers / 180 terabytes
- Hosting in two US Signal data centers and one city data center
- 1,000+ Managed Devices
- 450+ Databases
- 300+ Network Assets and 300+ APs



Results

Despite these challenges, the US Signal team was able to complete Phase 1 of the project on time and within budget. Some of the IT environments were even ahead of schedule.

US Signal was able to scale the capacity of the ReliaCloud environment quickly to accommodate 70 separate locations and 3,500 users with more than 250 servers and 180 terabytes. Much of the first six months of the project included migrating data and workloads from the existing service provider's data center to ReliaCloud.

As the relationship evolves, the City of Minneapolis will continue to look to US Signal as a strategic service provider. US Signal continues to supplement the City's team with diverse expertise, across many technologies, bringing

solutions and resources as needed, even outside the originally contracted services.

The City is already seeing on-going benefits as they are more flexible and more responsive to stakeholders needs. City administrators expect to save more than \$3 million annually with US Signal, and as new upgrades and applications are needed as part of organic growth, the City will continue to benefit from US Signal's versatility and ability to plan and manage a dynamic IT infrastructure.





Digital Infrastructure Solutions Built for Your Business



US Signal, established in 2001, is a premier national digital infrastructure company that operates a fully owned fiber network to deliver a wide range of advanced digital solutions. Our offerings include robust cloud services, secure colocation facilities, high-performance connectivity, comprehensive hardware resale, and managed IT services, empowering businesses to enhance their operational efficiency through tailored network, data center, data protection, and cybersecurity solutions.