

Major League Baseball® franchise implements SD-WAN for home run connectivity that boosts IT resiliency, reliability and network performance

The Cleveland Guardians®, a Major League Baseball team, sought to enhance the reliability and performance of their network infrastructure. With an increasing number of bandwidth-hungry applications emerging as an essential part of staying competitive as an organization, they knew they had to change their technology lineup. A two-way marketing partnership with the networking experts at Windstream Enterprise has hit the ball out of the park, delivering the upgraded connectivity the Guardians need to stay at the forefront.

At a glance



Industry

Professional sports

League

Major League Baseball (MLB®)

Titles

Two World Series Championships

Six American League Pennants

Customer

8 locations

~600 employees

Challenges

Outdated network

Insufficient bandwidth

Limited redundancy

Solutions

SD-WAN

Cloud Connect

WE Connect portal

Results

Reliable and resilient connectivity

Significant cost savings

New app enablement

Peanuts, Cracker Jack® and data: ballpark essentials

Guardians' leadership considers effective, timely communication to be key, and data to be the lifeblood of the organization. Those are central elements to their competitive advantage as they try to stay one step ahead of the other 30 MLB teams. So, it's imperative for the franchise to have a lightning-fast network for the collection and dissemination of data, including players' statistics and team performance metrics, to benefit the administrative staff, the front office, coaches, scouts and players. Team personnel use various data-rich applications and videos that require high-quality and always-available bandwidth.

The network is crucial for game day, as it provides connectivity for radio and press broadcasters and applications in the stadium, including ticketing, hospitality and scoreboard videos to deliver the best possible fan experience. The network is also paramount for communication with partners and vendors, as well as player agents and members of the local and national media.

The previous network struck out in meeting the Guardians' requirements due to high costs, insufficient bandwidth, complicated management and lack of redundancy.

"We trust Windstream Enterprise to manage our network. Beyond our network partnership, they have also been a great marketing partner."

Brynn Morgan
Account Executive,
Corporate Partnerships & Premium
Hospitality, Cleveland Guardians

The franchise modernized their network by upgrading to a Windstream Enterprise SD-WAN (Software-Defined Wide Area Network) solution at their eight locations, including Progressive Field and their affiliated minor-league teams' stadiums. The Guardians now have dual active/active connectivity to maximize uptime and resiliency.

Scorekeeping the benefits of SD-WAN

SD-WAN has proven to be more cost-effective, flexible and easier to manage. The centralized WE Connect portal makes it simple for team personnel to touch base with support from Windstream Enterprise, which manages the network on the franchise's behalf.

Team leaders of the Guardians trust Windstream Enterprise to go to bat for them—to fully manage the network and proactively resolve issues—so they can focus their internal IT resources on streamlining operations and business innovations.

Now, the Guardians' advanced network has the bandwidth to support new baseball applications and other leading technologies as they become available.

“Windstream Enterprise's SD-WAN allowed for a more efficient and cost-effective way to manage the things that we were previously managing,” says Whitney Kuzmaul, the Cleveland Guardians' senior director of infrastructure and operations. “It gives us more flexibility in routing traffic and pushing / pulling data to and from various locations and even enables us to onboard new services without having to adapt one particular site or another.”

“What really sold the SD-WAN solution was the ability to bring everything into a centralized portal,” says Kuzmaul.

Heavy hitting cloud computing support

The Guardians required dedicated connectivity to the Google Cloud Platform (GCP) for additional computing resources, which Kuzmaul said he saw as an augmentation of what his team was previously capable of. IT staff deployed applications, data and services to the GCP to enhance Guardians executives' decision-making capabilities, which the franchise views as a competitive advantage.

The Guardians implemented Windstream Enterprise Cloud Connect for dedicated high-bandwidth computing and storage connections to two Google Cloud virtual remote servers. Supported by Windstream Enterprise, the Guardians now have dependable, high-bandwidth connectivity to the cloud computing environment. The franchise regularly uses WE Connect for tracking performance, making upgrade requests, troubleshooting issues and billing.

“After transitioning to the cloud, we brought direct connections onto the service platform without having to adjust our process. SD-WAN and Cloud Connect make onboarding additional services that much easier,” Kuzmaul says. “We've grown the volume of big-compute data layers that are transporting enough data running on GCP to a level that we needed dedicated premium bandwidth right way. We can now use Windstream Enterprise SD-WAN to take that dedicated direct path of any GCP traffic to and from all of our locations.”

“The Windstream Enterprise support team has been top-notch—the best service provider we have ever worked with.”

Whitney Kuzmaul
Senior Director of Infrastructure & Operations, Cleveland Guardians

Our managed connectivity, communications and security solutions are innovative. Your business outcomes are imperative.

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