

HUGHES®

Industry

Retail

Strategic priorities

- Future proof infrastructure supporting retail operations
- Improve edge security to protect retail sites and critical information
- Migrate to cloud for agility

Partner

Hughes Managed Services offers a portfolio of turnkey, fully managed enterprise solutions in SD-WAN, networking, digital signage, and cloud-based employee communications, enabling its customers to focus on the operations and success of their business.

VMware footprint

- Azure VMware Solution
- VMware SD-WAN™
 - VMware SD-WAN Edge 510
 - VMware SD-WAN Edge 3400

VMware and Hughes Managed Services Bring Cloud Innovation to Major Sporting Goods Retailer

A large sporting goods retailer was seeking to expand and optimize cloud services and applications that support its core business operations at stores throughout the western U.S. The retailer wanted to enhance its ability to monitor application performance and integrate robust security at the infrastructure edge and cloud services. Working closely with Hughes Managed Services, a leading network technology and solutions provider, the retailer deployed Azure VMware Solution together with VMware SD-WAN™ to support its multi-cloud infrastructure, backed by next-generation security for on-premises network elements.

About the customer

As one of America's top retailers of sporting goods and accessories, the company offers a wide range of athletic and outdoor equipment. With more than 400 locations across several western states, the retailer provides consumers a wide variety of quality products.

“The ability to take something new from VMware — Azure VMware Solution — work on it together, get it spun up and tested in just a couple of days, and get it deployed into our customer environment in less than a week, speaks to the strength of our partnership and the strength of the technology.”

Jeff Bradbury, Senior Marketing Director, Hughes Managed Services

Choosing the cloud

The customer experience is top of mind in the retail industry, and innovation and agility are key to keeping pace in a fiercely competitive environment. To ensure fast and efficient payment transactions, build customer loyalty, and streamline operations, a leading sporting goods retailer wanted to update and future-proof its network. The enterprise reached out to its technology partner, Hughes Managed Services, to design a cloud-ready and secured edge solution.

“Modern retail establishments can struggle with a host of issues if the network isn’t available and delivering the desired performance and operational capabilities,” said Jeff Bradbury, Senior Marketing Director at Hughes Managed Services. “They might not be able to interact with customers, process credit card transactions, support loyalty systems and inventory, or use their omnichannel capabilities within the store environment.”

Although the existing network infrastructure was stable enough to meet its current needs, the retailer realized its evolving cloud strategy demanded a stronger digital infrastructure. Approximately 60 percent of its traffic was already going to SaaS applications, and the organization was planning to migrate all its on-premises data center operations to Microsoft Azure cloud services. The retailer needed a cloud-forward infrastructure platform that was simple to install and use, and would enable it to quickly move workloads to the cloud, without compromising security.

VMware SD-WAN and Hughes

Hughes Managed Services set up a proof of concept featuring VMware SD-WAN. The retailer was especially impressed by the solution’s visualization capabilities and user-friendliness. They began deploying it to all stores and the data center. Delivered as a subscription-based service by Hughes, the solution features a VMware SD-WAN Edge 510 at each location, as well as a VMware SD-WAN Edge 3400 in the data center for the overlay, all riding on top of broadband cable and LTE WAN circuits. The solution also includes a Hughes HR4860 next-generation firewall for strong security at the edge.



Installation of the solution at retail sites was fast and simple, often taking less than half an hour. Serving as the foundation for the retailer’s operations, VMware SD-WAN helps the organization gain the performance, security, and capacity necessary to connect locations, support multiple transactions, and handle essential back-office functions to power the business.

“The suite of capabilities that VMware brings is significant, because each piece makes the network perform better, whether it’s routing around a circuit that may not be performing as well as it should be, error correction capabilities, or managing latency and other issues,” said Bradbury. “For retailers with a lot of applications running, that need consistently high levels of network performance, VMware is a great platform.”

“The VMware SASE Orchestrator is a very helpful and intuitive interface that allows customers to more easily understand their network’s performance and take action on what they’re seeing. They can actually see when the VMware technology is taking two yellow-light links that are mediocre, and giving them a strong, green-light connection.”

Pranav Kondala, Principal Solutions Architect, Hughes Managed Services



Nimble workloads with Azure VMware Solution

The new VMware solution not only provides a powerful infrastructure solution for the retailer's existing needs, but a springboard for future cloud innovation. VMware SD-WAN lets the organization connect users to workloads utilizing the Azure VMware Solution. The organization can migrate workloads from its on-premises environments, create or deploy new virtual machines, and consume Azure services from private clouds using familiar VMware tools.

"During the last phase of the rollout, our customer wanted to test connecting its stores to Microsoft Azure through VMware SD-WAN, to test applications in the cloud," said Bradbury. "Working with VMware, we developed templates in less than two days. By day four we were able to push all the sites into production to test applications in Azure. The customer was very impressed; they had been expecting months for the migration, instead of a few days."

"The VMware solution essentially functions as its own gateway directly into Azure, without having to go through another interstitial hop to reach it," said Pranav Kondala, Principal Solutions Architect at Hughes Managed Services. "Connecting into Azure in this way provides improvements in efficiency, cloud access, and cost for our customer."

The retailer also appreciated the visibility into network applications provided by the VMware SD-WAN Orchestrator. This scalable, web-based central management tool gives the retailer real-time insight into performance by drilling down into traffic flows, WAN circuit performance metrics, application flow metrics, and more.

"Before VMware, we could offer very little application visibility," said Kondala. "We could show which applications were in use, but had little information on their utilization, how and when they were being utilized, and how the infrastructure impacted them. The VMware SD-WAN Orchestrator lets us see how the network is performing — not only in the moment, but historically — for application-level visibility that our customers did not have before."

The VMware SD-WAN solution not only helps provide assured performance for retail applications, but streamlines operations for Hughes Managed Services, enabling the company to deliver better, more responsive service to customers.

"We can get in and get out of a site in half an hour, because the platform is really simple," said Kondala. "You plug it in, get it up and running, and then you can just leave it alone and it will run. If you need to make changes, it's all done through the common management platform, and it can all be handled remotely, without an onsite visit. Ever since we installed VMware SD-WAN at the retail organization, we have seen a significant drop in calls to our support center."

Future plans

The retailer has successfully deployed its VMware SD-WAN and Azure VMware Solution throughout its stores and is moving forward with a cloud migration strategy.

"This retailer has completed migration of its Office 365 applications to a SaaS model, along with its loyalty program, purchase order systems, and other systems," said Bradbury. "A few applications, such as inventory management, still remain on-premises, but the organization plans to move them to the cloud. Approximately 90 percent of its applications will be fully transitioned to either SaaS or Azure by early next year."

With its new cloud-forward VMware SD-WAN solution in place, and its ongoing partnership with Hughes Managed Services, the retailer has created a more nimble infrastructure that can easily adapt to new business needs, serving customers better, faster, and more cost-effectively.