

CASE STUDY

Large Event Center Exhibits 5-Star Network with Infoblox



THE CUSTOMER - LARGE EVENT VENUE

A world-class convention center provides millions of square feet of space for conventions booked by adjoining hotels, which are owned by the same company. It offers a variety of exclusive services, including network and Internet connectivity, to exhibitors at the events it hosts.

THE CHALLENGE

Standing up and Tearing Down Fast, Reliable Networks

The network team is a one-stop shop for all the services booth exhibitors need. Their goal, says the Network Administrator who orchestrates the ongoing task of standing up and tearing down private networks for the hundreds of companies who come for a few days or a week, is to “give them networks as fast and easy to use as if they were back in their own offices.” It’s a little bit like traveling with the circus, and he says that one of the primary things he expects to get from network management tools is agility. “I need DNS and DHCP services,” he says, “that are easy, simple, and stable.”

Before Infoblox came in, the network team used Microsoft Windows servers to separately host Domain Name System (DNS) and Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) core network services. They weren’t entirely satisfied with this approach. Engineers were experiencing timeouts and lockdowns when several users were accessing the system at once, and it was taking too many clicks to do things like creating subnets.

THE SOLUTION

Highly Available, Resilient Five Star Network Service

When one of the hotels the convention center supports undertook an initiative to provide highly available, resilient Five Diamond Wi-Fi service to its guests, the Network Administrator saw it as an opportunity to replace the Windows machines with a better solution. Although his team is separate from the IT departments that serve the hotels, they work closely with them.

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Network Administrator

DHCP, DNS, and IP address management (IPAM) were a core component of the overall bid, and Trace3 Consulting, an Infoblox value-added reseller, was delivering an Infoblox solution. The Network Administrator went to management, and citing the proof of concept that Infoblox had given the hotel, suggested that they extend the procurement to the convention center. The outcome was a high-availability pair of Infoblox appliances to handle DNS and DHCP services for exhibitor networks.

THE RESULTS

A Flawless Handling of High DNS Traffic

When asked how easy the transition was, the Network Administrator says, “Transferring data from our old system was actually a breeze. Infoblox has a wizard that combed through our Microsoft DNS and DHCP servers. It took about 30 minutes.” Since the appliances were installed, he has seen significant efficiency gains. High availability is also a plus. “We haven’t had a failure since Infoblox came on board,” he says, “but we do occasionally have to move one of the servers supporting an exhibitor to another data center, and we can power it down and move it without disrupting service.”

Infoblox has automatic logoff and anywhere access, which have alleviated the timeout and lockdown problems. The team also finds Infoblox DNS fingerprinting, which identifies a device and maps the IP address to the MAC address and operating system, useful in identifying users and expediting troubleshooting.

As for the high DNS traffic that big events generate, Infoblox has had no trouble handling it. An IT executive involved in the adjoining hotel’s high-availability initiative says, “At a recent event, there were 68,000 requests in a 3-minute period. During another conference, we had nearly 2,700 in less than a minute. And in another, it was more than 8,000 connections in 5 minutes. Infoblox handled it all flawlessly.”

In the future, the Network Administrator hopes to get funding for Infoblox DNS firewall. “Malware is a real risk,” he says, “with so many devices coming in and out of the convention center.” DNS firewall protects against malware by disrupting the ability of infected clients to communicate with command-and-control servers.

Customer: Convention Center
Industry: Hospitality
Location: North America

OBJECTIVES:

- Gain easy and agile network management tools
- Eliminate timeouts and lockdowns
- Simplify the process of creating hundreds of private networks

RESULTS:

- Zero DNS problems
- Greater network insights
- Reliable service for high volumes of DNS requests

PRODUCTS:

- NIOS DDI



Infoblox unites networking and security to deliver unmatched performance and protection. Trusted by Fortune 100 companies and emerging innovators, we provide real-time visibility and control over who and what connects to your network, so your organization runs faster and stops threats earlier.

Corporate Headquarters
 2390 Mission College Blvd, Ste. 501
 Santa Clara, CA 95054

+1.408.986.4000
www.infoblox.com