Case Study

WEHCO Video needed to transition subscriber services and diagnostics to another provider **We helped them with a successful conversion**

SMOOTH TRANSITIONS

WEHCO needed a provider who would be able to seamlessly transition all of their customers over to a new system.

THE CHALLENGE

WEHCO Video, a part of WEHCO Media, is a diverse communications company with interests in newspapers, cable television and internet business. Headquartered in Little Rock, Arkansas, they began operation with one newspaper in 1909 and have grown to operate twenty five newspapers and 13 cable television companies in 6 states. WEHCO Video provides cable TV service, broadband access, and digital voice to their subscribers.

In 2010, the provider of managed broadband services they had been with for several years was unexpectedly acquired by another company and things began to change. The changes resulted in WEHCO's dissatisfaction with the level of service from the new provider. Disappointed with this turn of events, WEHCO began thinking of a change of their own.

WEHCO had been happy with their original provider for subscriber provisioning, cable modem diagnostics for their network, and email services and end-user support for their subscribers. After the acquisition though, it became apparent they would not be receiving the level of customer service and engineering assistance they were accustomed to. A further blow came when they realized that the diagnostics software they were using to manage their network would no longer be supported. They would have to transition their entire network to the new platform used by the acquiring company if they wanted to continue receiving software and engineering assistance.

THE RESULTS

The conversion of WEHCO's broadband services went smoothly. All customer impacting work was scheduled in the very early morning hours. This would limit any effects of the transition to the fewest number of subscribers. Short periods of downtime during the scheduled transition windows did not last more than thirty minutes to an hour. After each conversion, ZCorum conducted continuous testing throughout the day to ensure everything was working properly. Each morning, WEHCO customers were able to connect and use their broadband service just as they did before. Bob Young was impressed with how ZCorum handled the conversion and expressed high praise for the ZCorum team.

"I was unexpectedly surprised. The pre-planning that the ZCorum team did obviously paid off. I can't tell you what they might have done different to have made it any smoother, which is a testimony to how well it went."

After such a successful initial collaboration, WEHCO and ZCorum have continued to work together, forging a strong partnership focused on ensuring the best possible broadband service for WEHCO's subscribers. Weekly conference calls are held with their teams to discuss current and future projects. In addition to the weekly calls, WEHCO corporate staff and the General Managers at each cable system have a ZCorum Business Account Manager (BAM) that they contact directly for help or to ask questions.

"We're very happy with the level of service we and our customers now receive from ZCorum. We're big fans of their TruVizion diagnostics software, which is much better than what we had before."

TruVizion
ADVANCED BROADBAND DIAGNOSTICS

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WEHCO's frustration grew when, to improve their service reliability, they requested to have multiple, local servers that were backed up regionally. This was not something the new provider was willing to do. And when WEHCO requested static IP addresses for business subscribers, the provider would take days to fill the order. With these limitations looming, WEHCO began researching other providers.

While WEHCO had good reasons to make a switch, they were also concerned with how a conversion could negatively impact their customers. Their large customer base was distributed among separate cable systems in several states. They knew that a project of this magnitude would be complicated and the transition would require extensive planning. Choosing the right partner was imperative.

As WEHCO launched its search for a new provider, they had three requirements for their candidates.

1. It was important that their subscribers not experience any extended outages during the changeover.
2. They also wanted the conversion to be completed in a timely manner, not drag on for months.
3. Finally they wanted a partner – not just a vendor—a company that would be willing to work with them on their specific needs and be prepared to grow as they grew.

WEHCO did extensive research and talked to their peers in the industry for recommendations to help them find a well-established and reliable provider they could count on. They arranged an initial meeting with ZCorum and were impressed with the approach taken by their team. Instead of trying to fit WEHCO's circumstances to ZCorum's capabilities, ZCorum was focusing on understanding how WEHCO did things. ZCorum would use that information as a starting point for planning a smooth transition.

THE SOLUTION

Over several meetings before the conversion, ZCorum's team became immersed in the technical aspects of the move, and spent time compiling a comprehensive study of each system. As part of that process they worked closely with Bob Young, WEHCO's Vice President of Engineering.

A detailed project plan was created, including identifying all the tasks necessary to convert subscriber email accounts and modem provisioning to ensure minimal customer impact. The primary goal was to get the conversion done quickly and minimize the time that subscribers would be receiving services and support from two different organizations.

For optimal results and minimal interruption the WEHCO-ZCorum team decided that the modem provisioning should be transitioned over time to ensure a smooth transition of broadband service at each of WEHCO's systems. It was decided to convert two complete systems per week until all were transitioned over. Customer email would be transitioned all at once, and would be done just prior to the conversion of the first cable system. Sufficient time for pre and post conversion planning and testing was also incorporated into the overall project plan.

At the outset, ZCorum began building the process of integrating their subscriber management system with WEHCO's ICOMS billing system so that step would be in place by the time the transition began. ZCorum's marketing department began working on the messaging that would be used to communicate with WEHCO's customers. This messaging would ensure that all subscribers were kept in the loop regarding changes to email, as well as the scheduled maintenance windows and expected service impact prior to each system's conversion.

> "WE WERE VERY IMPRESSED WITH ZCORUM AND THE TIME THEY PUT IN BEFOREHAND TO MAP OUT ALL THE DETAILS OF EACH STEP IN THE TRANSITION."

BOB YOUNG
VP OF ENGINEERING
WHECO

THE BOTTOM LINE

ZCorum transitioned WEHCO's entire broadband management system with minimal disruption to subscriber services. WEHCO now receives the level of support they need to keep their network on track and their subscribers happy. They have the assurance of diagnostics software that is fully supported and continuously updated with new features. WEHCO feels they now have a strong partner that listens to their concerns and cares for their success.

VIDEO RESOURCES

ZCorum™

About ZCorum

ZCorum is the leading provider of innovative diagnostics and managed broadband solutions to telecommunications companies, helping them reduce costs, increase operational efficiency and improve the subscriber experience. For more information, visit ZCorum.com.

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