

A photograph of a Starlink satellite dish mounted on a metal pole, which is attached to the side of a light-colored building. The dish is pointed towards the sky. The image is partially framed by a blue diagonal graphic element.

Enhancing Network Redundancy with Starlink for Major Retailer

THE ISSUE

The customer, a retail chain of more than 5,000 stores, faced ongoing challenges with its outdated satellite backup system. The existing solution was unreliable and couldn't provide the necessary bandwidth to support their operations when the primary network circuits failed. The company wanted a solution that could be monitored remotely and would provide the necessary bandwidth to keep their stores, distribution centers, and remote locations operational, even in the event of network disruptions. Seeking a modern and reliable backup solution, the customer decided to explore Starlink, a satellite network known for its high bandwidth and robust connectivity.

To implement this project, the customer partnered with Wachter, a trusted service provider with expertise in large-scale network deployments. Wachter was tasked with installing Starlink dishes at retail locations across the United States, including in Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto Rico, all within a five-month period.

THE SOLUTION

In preparation for this project, Wachter's team underwent training. Each of the 45 teams, made up of one technician and Quality Control supervisors, was stocked with the proper materials, tools, and documentation required for successful completion of the installation.

Each retail location posed unique installation challenges because of the varying building designs and site conditions. Some sites required roof-mounted installations, while others were better suited for wall mounts. Starlink's proprietary cabling had specific distance limitations, which meant that each site had to be evaluated carefully to ensure the dish could be connected to the network equipment within the required range.

The first step involved conducting thorough site surveys at each retail location. These surveys were critical in identifying the most suitable locations for the Starlink dishes, taking into account factors like building design, roof access, proximity to power sources, and the availability of network infrastructure. Once the optimal installation spots were selected, Wachter's Rollout technicians got to work mounting the dishes on either the roofs or exterior walls of the buildings. The installations involved running proprietary cabling, setting up power connections, and ensuring the network infrastructure was compatible with the new system.

Once the physical installations were complete, the teams moved to the next phase of the project: network validation. Using mobile setup applications, technicians carefully aligned the Starlink dishes to ensure they received the best possible signal. The dishes were then connected to the Starlink network, and each system was tested for connectivity. After successful validation, the Starlink systems were integrated into the customer's internal network to ensure seamless operation.

THE RESULTS

All 5,500 retail locations were successfully equipped with Starlink satellite dishes within five months, installing up to 80 sites per day at the peak of the project.

The customer was so pleased with the success of the Starlink upgrades, after completing the retail locations, Wachter's team was tasked with installing Starlink systems at the customer's distribution centers. Wachter also received a service and support contract to provide ongoing troubleshooting, maintenance, and break/fix services for all locations nationwide. The success of the project reinforced the trust between the two companies and set the stage for continued collaboration.

KEY CUSTOMER TAKEAWAYS

Proper Training Proved Critical for Successful Project

All technicians were brought to Wachter's headquarters in Arkansas for an intensive training program. Technicians observed live installations, allowing them to ask questions and familiarize themselves with the process in a real-world setting before heading out on their own.

Efficient and Timely Execution

Despite the technical and logistical challenges, the project was completed on time, with up to 80 locations being installed per day.

Future Opportunities Gained

The successful implementation of Starlink at 5,500 locations led to further business opportunities, including installing systems at distribution centers and a service and support contract for ongoing maintenance.

