Driscoll's Gets the Freshest Berries from Farm to Table

with a Talari SD-WAN

For more than a hundred years, the family-owned Driscoll's has grown the finest quality market-fresh strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and blackberries. In the past two decades, Driscoll's has rapidly expanded from its roots in California's Pajaro Valley to become the largest berry distributor in the world.

Driscoll's®
ONLY THE FINEST BERRIES™

Executive Summary

Company
Driscoll's

Location
29 sites in North America, South America, Europe and Africa

Key Applications
Agriculture ERP, ShoreTel VoIP, Citrix, Exchange, Accounting

Challenge
Deliver 100% network uptime to remote sites using fast failover

Solution
Talari SD-WAN

Results
- Boosted network quality, eliminating WAN outages
- Delivered a better user experience for enterprise applications, VoIP and VDI
- 6X reduction in bandwidth cost at key sites
- Leveraged broadband Internet and eliminated MPLS
- Eliminated calls to IT about site outages

http://www.talari.com

Overcome Outages

One of the ways that Driscoll's delivers fresh, delicious berries is to have highly trained employees inspect each batch of berries after harvest. Once the berries pass inspection, they are immediately cooled at the distribution facility, where they are not touched again to prevent bruising. Within hours, they are on their way to their final destination.

"Fresh berries spoil extremely fast," says Andrew Longsworth, Lead Network Engineer at Driscoll's. "Every time that a WAN circuit went down, we lost money due to diminished connectivity between the branches, which impacted our communication and visibility. Our number one priority was to have multiple links at remote sites, so they are always on and always ready," says Longsworth.

Connectivity for the distribution centers where berries are cooled, inspected and shipped out is business-critical. "Throughout that process, we have to maintain inventory control, warehouse management, QA data and shipping and receiving information," he says. "If any of those pieces go down, it delays the process overall."

Driscoll's has been using a Talari Software Defined WAN (SD-WAN) for nearly four years to deliver ultra-reliable WAN connectivity to dozens of locations across North America, South America and Europe. A Talari SD-WAN brings real-time, packet-level intelligence to Driscoll's global network, which connects its farms, nurseries, distribution centers, corporate offices, and data center.

Now, if a WAN link goes down, the day's harvest isn't ruined. "Our biggest benefit from Talari is a more reliable network and the ability to deliver 100% uptime," says Longsworth.

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> **Andrew Longsworth**
> **Lead Network Engineer**
> **Driscoll's**

Driscoll's sites have dual connections to the Internet, and traffic is routed—packet-by-packet—over the fastest path. Time-sensitive applications like VoIP and VDI get the highest priority and are transmitted over the network links with the lowest packet loss and latency. Applications get the full use of the aggregated bandwidth at all times, maximizing capacity and eliminating the need to overprovision.

The SD-WAN has visibly improved the quality of a broad variety of applications, from agriculture-specific enterprise software to everyday business applications and VoIP. For instance, workers who tag and inspect the berries use a QA application that is delivered via virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI).

Using Talari has improved the quality and reliability of service for its ShoreTel phone system. "Talari's site-to-site dynamic conduit is key for our voice system," says Longsworth. "We really like being able to use VoIP and not incur long distance charges, especially with our operations in Mexico and Europe. It's a benefit from a cost perspective."

With Talari, the global WAN has rock-solid reliability, even in remote agricultural regions. That's why Talari appliances have become part of the operational playbook as the company adds new locations. The biggest network

challenge remains at farms and distribution centers so remote that there is only one Internet provider in the area. "The sites without Talari are a bigger headache," he says.

Add Broadband, Cut MPLS

Having a Talari SD-WAN has led to some strategic decisions about the WAN design. "With Talari, we have the ability to use commodity Internet," says Longsworth. "It's a point of flexibility that we didn't have before."

"We immediately saw that when we added Internet and MPLS connections into the mix, Talari would select toward the Internet connection, because most of the time it is a better connection," he says. That observation ultimately led Driscoll's to migrate its WAN to broadband Internet and eliminate MPLS. "I've completely cancelled MPLS at this point," he says.

Gaining Internet economics with the reliability of MPLS has resulted in a big cost savings. "We went from paying $600 per Mbps to $100 per Mbps for bandwidth for our distribution centers," he says. "We scaled up the WAN bandwidth without scaling up the pricing. And we've seen a big performance and management improvement at our remote sites."

A Better Quality of Life

A better quality network has had far-reaching benefits. "The network team doesn't complain about being on call anymore," says Longsworth. "Before Talari, if there was an after-hours outage, they would have to wake up in the middle of the night and manually switch the site to the secondary link."

Now, if there is a WAN link failure, workers are not impacted and IT is not in firefighting mode to fix it. Longsworth cites a recent example of a link failure at its Santa Maria, CA operations. "We went from 19Mbps to 10Mbps so there was a little bit of a performance penalty," he says. "But the users didn't notice and we could replace the bad hardware at our leisure. It wasn't all hands on deck."

Calls into the service desk about site connectivity problems have been cut to zero— down from an average of one a day. There's another intangible benefit, too: "Having a reliable network helps our reputation in IT as being a reliable and trusted partner," he says.

Greater Visibility

With Talari continuously monitoring the health of the network, the IT team has greater visibility into the network, simplifying performance management, troubleshooting and diagnosis.

"I use Talari statistics to give trouble reports to providers," says Longsworth. "I can show them, for example, that the latency was good before but now it's jumped 20 percent."

A Growing Operation

Driscoll's continues to bring berries that are grown, harvested and distributed with the highest standards to new regions around the world, and substantial development efforts are underway in Europe and Asia. The company can be confident that its software defined WAN is flexible as the business continues to grow. Fast, reliable connectivity to new branch offices and farming operations can be assured with a minimum of management overhead.

"With Talari in place, as we add more locations and roll into more video, voice and network-centric applications, we are ready," says Longsworth. "Before, there was going to be a big cost to upgrade our MPLS network."

Longsworth sums it up: "Talari lets me sleep at night. Literally. It's a quality of life issue."

About Talari Networks

Talari Networks, the trusted SD-WAN technology and market leader, engineers the internet and branch for maximum business impact, delivering superior application reliability and resiliency, while unlocking the benefits of branch consolidation. Incorporating years of innovation into five generations of product, Talari is deployed across thousands of sites in 40 countries.

TALARI Networks™