



SUCCESS STORY: NEW JERSEY RESOURCES

BRINGING A NEW ENERGY TO IT INFRASTRUCTURE



When energy utility New Jersey Resources

(NJR) needed to reenergize its internal and customer-facing business applications while keeping user and company data secure, they turned to Aspire Technology Partners.

Aspire, a professional technology services firm, specializes in the delivery of robust, secure business infrastructure and communication solutions designed specifically to support and achieve the business goals of its clients. Aspire’s decades of deep networking and security expertise enabled them to design, implement and transition NJR to a cutting edge network and security infrastructure that could provide continuous customer service.

A STRONG, SECURE NETWORK TO DELIVER BUSINESS VALUE

As a provider of natural gas to thousands of families and businesses in the Mid-Atlantic region, NJR needed a highly available network and security infrastructure whose total cost of ownership was completely optimized, as well as:

- A LAN and WAN network foundation that could support a full suite of business applications and assets.
- A network secure enough to block external and internal threats that would also provide a visible audit trail and meet Sarbanes-Oxley compliance standards.
- A user-, customer- and supplier-friendly solution that is scalable and flexible enough to easily accommodate rapid growth.

- New, fully supported hardware and software with full replacement and update capabilities.
- A redundant network core and wide area design that provides for business continuity.

DETAILED PLANNING LEADS TO ROBUST SOLUTIONS

Aspire, a Cisco Premier certified partner, used the PPDIIO methodology—Prepare, Plan, Design, Implement, Operate, Optimize—to create and execute NJR’s solution, ensuring seamless deployment and minimal risk to the company’s vital assets.

Aspire’s expert team collaborated with necessary stakeholders to ensure that all of NJR’s unique business needs, workflow and technology requirements were met at each step. Next, they began the planning process by defining business, technical and timeline constraints.

SUPERIOR COMMUNICATIONS CONNECT IT & BUSINESS

Aspire’s philosophy of communicating with problem owners directly proved to be the best way to ensure that the solutions solve business challenges and bridge any gaps between the internal IT team and business constituents.

An extensive transition plan minimized risk and mapped out a seamless switch to the new infrastructure. Then, before deploying NJR’s new robust and secure solution, Aspire conducted a detailed testing phase that focused on staging and configuration of the new network infrastructure switches and security devices. The in-depth planning and testing phase ensured that—to internal users and to customers—the solution felt more like a low impact upgrade than a complete overhaul of the legacy system.



“With a proven project methodology and their grasp of our internal processes, Aspire was an ideal partner in the creation of a network that will enable greater customer satisfaction while keeping vital information secure. We are thrilled to have found a long-term business partner like Aspire who can keep us on the leading edge of secure network technology and other business-driven IT best practices.”

– Kevin Fornino,
Manager of Information
Technology,
New Jersey Resources



SECURE FOUNDATIONS FOR WEB-BASED CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Aspire team's core competency is securing the business applications and services that matter most to you and your customers. So, when NJR needed new internal and customer facing business applications to keep user and company data secure, they turned to Aspire.

Like more than 70% of utility companies, NJR provides customers with the ability to view energy usage and make payments over the Internet. Aspire recognized that these self-service portals are crucial to the health of the business, so the solutions had to be

flexible and scalable enough to accommodate users and encourage growth while keeping customer and company data secure.

Because these web-based services are designed to extract data from key internal systems and present them to the outside world, it is imperative that they are constructed with a strong foundation. "Aspire's holistic approach to secure, converged networks ensures that your solution's benefits can extend to all corners of your business — and to your customers," said John C. Harris of Aspire.

ABOUT ASPIRE

Aspire Technology Partners is a professional technology services firm specializing in the delivery of robust, secure business infrastructure and communication solutions designed specifically to support and achieve the business goals of our clients. Our solution designs are driven by an unwavering focus on transforming enterprise infrastructures into enablers of business value. Our dynamic team is comprised of seasoned business professional consultants and proven technology specialists. This powerful combination ensures the performance, availability and security of our clients' infrastructures and business-critical assets.

LAYERED SECURITY SOLUTIONS FOR MAXIMUM PROTECTION

First, Aspire developed the initial implementation plan for the transition, as well as performed both old and new hardware inventory and testing. "These steps helped ensure that NJR was receiving maximum ROI from all of its assets because cost effectiveness can be an important element in the overall success of a project," said Samuel Oncea, Aspire's account manager for NJR.

By combining their core competencies in networking and security, intimate knowledge of NJR business processes and a full arsenal of leading edge hardware and software technology, the Aspire team was able to implement a solution that addressed all NJR's security and usability needs while allowing for future growth.

"With a proven project methodology and their grasp of our internal processes, Aspire was an ideal partner in the creation of a network that will enable greater customer satisfaction while keeping vital information secure," said Kevin Fornino, Manager of Information Technology for NJR.

ASPIRE & NJR: BUILDING A LASTING PARTNERSHIP

Deployment wasn't the end of Aspire's involvement with NJR. Execution of a comprehensive knowledge transfer and

extensive post-deployment support ensured the future success of the solution.

Aspire's customer commitment, senior staff and low employee turnover combine to give NJR the business partner that they had desired at the beginning of their project. "We are thrilled to have found a long-term business partner like Aspire who can keep us on the leading edge of secure network technology and other business-driven IT best practices," said Fornino.

RESULTS THAT BENEFIT EVERY CUSTOMER

After phase I of the project, NJR realized several benefits, including:

- Business continuity as a result of the infrastructure's redundant cores.
- "Transparent Wall" flexibility that will allow the company to scale with future growth.
- Improved internal reporting and auditing processes that allow for improved compliance.
- Lower operating costs, with savings passed on to customers.

NJR is already working with Aspire's team to complete additional phases, including the implementation of a secure wireless network that will enable a new generation of communications and service.