cisco Meraki

CBTS

Meraki deployment is fastest growing managed service in CBTS history

63%
managed service YoY growth

600
net new customers

74%
buy additional CBTS solutions

Industry

Service Provider

Location

Cincinnati, USA

Products

- MR
- MS
- MX
- Insight

Highlights

- CBTS was looking for ways to expand geographically and increase revenue while keeping Operating Expenditures (OpEx) low and adding predictability to a new market offering
- The Network-as-a-Service (NaaS) full-stack offering features hardware, licensing, configuration, implementation, and co-management rolled into one monthly expense that can be scaled up or down for ultimate flexibility
- Since selecting Meraki four years ago, CBTS now boasts over 600 unique NaaS customers and an average site install interval of 30 days. Not only has the Meraki offering driven revenue but it also reduced their quote-to-cash interval, which lowers OpEx at the same time

Business challenge

As a service provider, CBTS was looking for ways to expand geographically and increase revenue without adding expenses. They needed a path to quickly upgrade end-of-life equipment that would not require a lengthy budget approval process. To accomplish this, they wanted to keep OpEx low while adding predictability to the offering. They hoped this approach would lead to a simple, fixed operational expense solution for their NaaS partners.

Meraki and its single-pane-of-glass dashboard, along with a cloud-based hosted control plane, allows CBTS to expand their business without concern for management networks or fiber assets. In addition, the Managed Service Provider's (MSP) portal in the dashboard facilitates management of multiple customers without the traditional technical debt required for Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) tools and additional headcount.

CBTS also wanted the ability to conduct moves, adds, and change configurations on the fly without needing to manually utilize compact discs or other labor-intensive methods. For this, they use the Meraki API for mass-programmatic changes and configurations. It enables them to scale geographically without increasing cost and expand their customer base, which allows for growth in margins.

Another key component of the Meraki model is that service providers can safely offer co-management options with their end customers. This allows them to have back their nights and weekends as well as gain oversight from experts without relinquishing control or access. This drives a collaborative network management approach, which reduces frustration and improves customer satisfaction.

> "What we've learned is we can combine cloud-managed technologies like Cisco Meraki and Viptela, among others, into about eight different network designs that fit more than 90 percent of our client base.
>
> **JOE PUTNICK**
>
> *CBTS Chief Innovation Officer*

Solution

CBTS manages over 600 Meraki customers and 15,000 Meraki devices. To scale at this pace, simplicity and flexibility are the foundation for success.

The NaaS offering is sold as a co-managed utility with a simple recurring monthly charge. It includes an automatic refresh of end-of-life Meraki equipment with managed license expiration and staggered rollouts. In terms of standardization, their customers expect visibility into how the network is performing.

This means they need to provide a predictable and reliable outcome with visibility from the host through the Wide Area Network (WAN) to the cloud and data center.

> We can get clients up and running faster and customize as needed to meet users' specific requirements.

JOE PUTNICK

CBTS Chief Innovation Officer

CBTS fulfills these expectations with a full-stack Meraki solution, enabling additional services like Cisco DNA Spaces and Cisco Unified Communications. CBTS not only delivers a consistent WLAN, LAN, and SD-WAN experience, but also offers artificial intelligence and network insights with Spaces, MV cameras, and Meraki Insight licensing. CBTS has an 83 percent full-stack deployment rate consisting of wireless, switching, and SD-WAN.

Being able to offer one platform to deliver a reliable and cost-effective user experience is key for business decision makers as equipment depreciates off their financial books.

CBTS offers these solutions in an OpEx utility model, allowing businesses to follow the Meraki upgrade path with the latest technology and features without the large capital outlays every three years. Meraki gives CBTS the perfect way to offer this end-of-obsolescence to their customers.

Results

CBTS is one of Cisco's fastest growing service providers in the United States, expanding at an impressive 63 percent year over year in FY20. The transport-agnostic nature of the Meraki MX device allows CBTS to migrate from a regional Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) provider to a North American-wide managed WAN provider.

Over decades of providing WAN, CBTS had only 116 unique MPLS customers with an average site installation time of 120 days.

Since selecting Meraki four years ago, CBTS now boasts over 600 unique WAN customers and an average site install interval of 30 days. Not only has the Meraki offering driven revenue but it also reduced their quote-to-cash interval, which lowers OpEx at the same time.

With the implementation of the Meraki API and webhooks, CBTS increased customer satisfaction with proactive network management and issue resolution, which decreased call volume to the Network Operations Center (NOC) and reduced time to resolution.

CBTS also expanded its Meraki offering as the company continues to innovate. By adding value to the customer life cycle with solutions like Meraki Insights, MV Sense, and Adaptive Policy, CBTS not only increased its Average Revenue Per User (ARPU), but also created a valuable reason to engage with existing customers throughout the life cycle.

Simply put, Meraki enables CBTS to go further, grow faster, and be better than traditional managed service offerings.

Going forward

CBTS will continue to grow their Meraki practice in addition to incorporating new products such as Meraki MG wireless WAN, MT sensors, and VMX virtual security/SD-WAN appliance.

Technical implementation

The NaaS offering today has hundreds of customers, all with unique topologies. Because every deployment is different, CBTS leveraged several key technical components during deployments, most notably for a 3,800-site food and retail customer that uses full-stack Meraki technology but also utilizes Cisco's Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) platform. In this unique franchise and corporate-owned store deployment, CBTS rolled out Meraki MX450s as hubs in the customer data center to book end their data networks. This centralized, consolidated solution with its strictly controlled processes is particularly valuable for non-technical workers at the franchise and corporate sites.

They also deployed Virtual Meraki MXs in the voice core to create a multi-path SD-WAN environment with traffic shaping and VoIP enhancements for the voice network, which includes thousands of handsets. Meraki's multi-hub design allows for intelligent load balancing and the virtual cores facilitate horizontal scaling with a Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) peer to a single interface on the carrier Session Border Control (SBC). Additionally, this network utilizes Meraki Wi-Fi analytics to ascertain business operational intelligence, thereby increasing revenue and target marketing.

Through this solution, CBTS was able to reduce downtime by 80 percent. It also proved very useful in getting a better handle on inventory control with the Meraki MX communicating with the distribution center, and the food and retail customer was able to sync its kitchen ovens to the perfect cooking temperature and time.

With an install pace of over 50 sites per week, the flexibility of Meraki SD-WAN offers fast implementation during off hours with no impact to the business operations, while creating a standardized approach to distributed networking.

Contact us here for more details.