

Zscaler Helped Northgate Market Become a Cloud-First Organization



Northgate Market owns and operates 40 supermarkets in Southern California, managing 500,000 customer visits per week. The company was founded in 1980 in Anaheim, CA., and focuses on providing fresh and prepared foods as well as domestic and imported Latin American grocery goods. It is dedicated to providing meaningful work, offering a workplace where individuals are treated as members of the family. The company also manages two data centers and a 384, 000 square foot distribution center.

The Challenge

Northgate Market expanded to 40 supermarkets through market growth and strategic acquisitions. Its ambitious expansion goals included additional services and capabilities intended to deliver exceptional service to its customers. These ambitions could not be served by its aging infrastructure with limited and failing network and security capabilities that had been stretched to the limits of their usefulness.

Northgate Market was operating on an MPLS network with two T-1 network connections and limited 3Mbps capacity at each location. A wireless 3G LTE network served as a backup when the primary terrestrial network failed. Unfortunately, the network was slow and experienced frequent outages (due to flooding of the wiring cabinets and other challenges).

“The network was very expensive, provided little value, and was problematic given the bandwidth-intensive software applications,” said Harrison Lewis, CIO of Northgate Market.

Further intensifying an already challenging user experience, all internet-bound traffic was backhauled from the individual supermarkets to the two corporate data centers and secured through web content filtering appliances before going out to the internet. This created bottlenecks and negatively impacted user experience as well as the ability for Northgate Market’s associates to deliver excellent service to its customers.

“If we were starting over today, what would we do? We would be leveraging tablets, handheld devices and personal devices,” Mr. Lewis said. “That would require a wireless network that was powerful and accessible in the entire facility.”

To achieve its goals, Northgate Market had to eliminate network outages and securely deliver the user experience that is foundational the company’s core principles. It also had to manage high network costs and increasing bandwidth requirements while strengthening the security of its network, its store locations and its data.

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Stronger Together

Northgate Market deployed VMware SD-WAN by VeloCloud to address these challenges for its store locations. And it employed Zscaler Internet Access to secure traffic from those locations.

“When we began looking at Zscaler, we liked the integration between VeloCloud and Zscaler,” Mr. Lewis said. “Zscaler was completely architected in a way that was about the cloud. It wasn’t trying to carry over hardware or make something fit, and it didn’t require us to implement technologies that weren’t pertinent to us.”

Zscaler and VMware SD-WAN by VeloCloud work together to optimize and secure local internet breakouts. Together, they enable fast and secure access to websites and business-critical cloud applications from its supermarket locations without the cost and complexity of traditional network and security appliances.

“Zscaler was the perfect solution given our business strategy, leveraging priority at the specific application-level unlike what was possible previously,” said Mr. Lewis.

The Path to Secure SD-WAN

The partnership of Zscaler and VeloCloud made it easy for Northgate Market to migrate from its legacy hub-and-spoke architecture to a secure SD-WAN infrastructure and securely route traffic from its multiple locations to the internet.

Previously, the Northgate Market information security team had to deploy and maintain firewall appliances at a number of its supermarket locations or project sites. The Zscaler Cloud Security Platform streamlined delivery of the entire security stack, helping Northgate Market reduce its overall expenses and recognize a 40-percent savings. The solution also enabled Northgate Market to increase its bandwidth capabilities to support constantly expanding traffic requirements while improving its security posture.

BENEFITS OF ZSCALER AND VMWARE SD-WAN BY VELOCLOUD

- 40 percent savings in expenses, with higher bandwidth consumption
- Increased security
- Network visibility simplified problem identification and remediation
- High availability configuration eliminated network outages
- Traffic prioritization and segmentation – PCI, web browsing
- Simplified and quick deployment of combined solution

With Zscaler securing its SD-WAN deployment, Northgate Market’s employees are better protected from web-based threats regardless of their location and can be confident that the appropriate protections are in place at all times, providing identical protection for users wherever they connect.

“It’s great to have visibility on what we’re protected against,” Mr. Lewis said. “Zscaler offers a very concentrated set of tools within its security arsenal and that is something others aren’t doing.”

Seeing is Believing

The powerful combination of Zscaler and VMware SD-WAN by VeloCloud helped simplify branch operations by using software-defined policies to route traffic via the most efficient path.

The improved visibility into its network enabled Northgate Market’s IT team to identify and solve problems much more quickly and efficiently than ever before. The high availability configuration, including traffic prioritization and segmentation, eliminated network outages.

Protecting Road Warriors

Northgate Market also recognized the need to protect the more than 250 employees that regularly travel from site to site, opting to replace its Cisco AnyConnect VPN with Zscaler Private Access.

“ZPA effectively serves as certificate on a device. It is a very critical component of our security architecture that’s necessary in this new environment,” Mr. Lewis said.

Innovation for Today and Beyond

While currently benefitting from the Zscaler cloud security platform, the Northgate Market team is also excited about what is yet to come.

“As they continue to streamline, so many things that are now one-off point solutions, Zscaler is well positioned to be able to bring in some of those other solutions, to go beyond what is available now,” Mr. Lewis said. “A lot more innovation is taking place on the Zscaler side. I think of Zscaler a little differently. Zscaler is really highly differentiated.”

More than a Solution

Aside from technology, Mr. Lewis noted that Zscaler differentiates itself in another way – the lengths it goes to ensure that customers fully benefit from the Zscaler platform.

“It kind of blows me away. I’ve met a number of people at Zscaler and a common thing is this attitude or culture where they’re almost unhappy if you’re not fully utilizing the solution,” Mr. Lewis said. “They’re interested in more than just selling you a product. That doesn’t exist these days. I’m not sure where that comes from, but it’s crazy good.”

About Zscaler

Zscaler enables the world’s leading organizations to securely transform their networks and applications for a mobile and cloud-first world. Its flagship services, Zscaler Internet Access™ and Zscaler Private Access™, create fast, secure connections between users and applications, regardless of device, location, or network. Zscaler services are 100% cloud delivered and offer the simplicity, enhanced security, and improved user experience that traditional appliances or hybrid solutions are unable to match. Used in more than 185 countries, Zscaler operates a multi-tenant, distributed cloud security platform that protects thousands of customers from cyberattacks and data loss. Learn more at [zscaler.com](https://www.zscaler.com) or follow us on Twitter [@zscaler](https://twitter.com/zscaler).

About Northgate Gonzalez Market

Founded in 1980 Northgate Gonzalez Market is an authentic, family-owned and operated Hispanic supermarket chain with 40 stores in Orange, Los Angeles and San Diego counties. Headquartered in Anaheim, Calif., it maintains its cultural heritage by offering its customers the best quality and freshest foods and, personalized service. Northgate Market’s commitment to its communities is furthered by the González Reynoso Family Foundation by providing scholarships and assisting families in need. Visit www.northgatemarket.com for more information.

