



Customer Profile

Company Name:

CVM

Location:

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Industry:

Construction, Engineering

Web site:

<http://www.cvmcompanies.com/>

About CVS

CVM (Christakis, VanOcker, Morrison) Engineers & Constructors consists of a team of experienced Structural Engineers, Architects, Materials Scientists and Construction Managers focused on Facilities Renewal, which encompasses the design, restoration, repair and enhancement of their clients' buildings and infrastructure.

CVM combines the diagnostics, engineering, and materials science skills of a leading engineering firm with the cost estimating, logistics, and at-risk contracting abilities of an experienced construction company.

Their integrated practice areas include building diagnostics, structural design, forensics, and construction services for a wide array of projects and clients, including many of the nation's most prominent institutions and corporations. Projects range from academic, institutional and commercial buildings to performing arts, sports and entertainment centers, advanced technology manufacturing facilities and special mechanical structures.

CVM Deploys The FirePass® Controller To Provide Secure, Simplified Remote Access

Executive Summary

Workers for CVM Engineers & Constructors needed reliable, secure access to any application from any location, using any device. Failure to consistently connect via a laptop out in the field, or from a PC at home, to the home office, could result in lost hours, lost productivity, user frustration, and unnecessary trips back into the office to get the critical information required. F5's FirePass gave CVM's remote users secure and reliable access to any authorized application from any Web-enabled device, from any location, without requiring special software or configuration on the remote device, and with no modifications to the back-end resources being accessed.

Challenge

CVM is an organization that's literally on the move: their engineers, architects and managers are often on the road, away from the office, working with clients at remote locations, across town or across the state. Reliable access to critical information in the home office while at a remote location was of paramount importance. The CVM employees out in the field needed to access architectural drawings, fill in time sheets, provide field reports, submit applications for payment, and more. Failure to consistently connect via a laptop out in the field, or from a PC at home, to the home office, could result in lost hours, lost productivity, user frustration, and unnecessary trips back into the office to get the critical information required by CVM personnel.

Ken Balch, IT Manager for CVM, was tasked with finding a solution that would enable CVM workers to securely access the data and tools they needed from any location, using any type of device - whether it was a cell phone, laptop, or home PC. The initial solution he tried, however, was less than satisfactory.

"When we first started out, we were looking for a PCAnywhere-type solution - establishing a VPN connection with the PC and tunneling into a PC in the office that you could log into," said Balch. "We ran into a multitude of issues just trying to manage the VPN."

If somebody had a remote PC that had a different version of Windows on it than that of the home office PC, Balch said, you'd "sometimes have to hunt for the right version of VPN software just so the system would run." There were other problems, including the hassle of installing and maintaining client software on every remote device - but the main problems were accessibility challenges and ultimately, user frustration and lost productivity.

"Some people could just never get it to function," Balch said. "And once they couldn't get in, they couldn't do their work. A lot of people did what they could remotely, and then email a file to someone here in the office, or actually be forced to come into the office to get what they needed. It was a nightmare."

Balch then discovered the FirePass controller, from F5.

Solution

F5's FirePass controller is an SSL-VPN, appliance-based solution that lets employees, customers and partners securely and reliably access authorized applications from any Web-enabled device, from any location - with no special software or configuration required on the remote device, and no modifications to the back-end resources being accessed.



For CVM, it was an approach that also eliminated the IPSec VPN support burden while adding more application access, including e-mail, legacy applications, and remote control of desktop PCs via any standard Web browser.

FirePass offers key benefits for companies looking for remote access solutions, including:

- Granular access control - allows administrators to dynamically authorize different levels of application access based on the user and accessing device.
- Adaptive client security - FirePass adapts various security policies to ensure client integrity. For example, FirePass will check for active virus scan and personal firewall programs on corporate laptops.
- Strong authentication - FirePass offers flexible authentication against RADIUS, LDAP, and other authentication servers. It also supports two-factor authentication for more stringent security.
- Reduced cost - With no pre-installed client software and with streamlined administration, the FirePass controller lowers deployment and ongoing maintenance costs.
- Anywhere access - FirePass offers the broadest remote access - employees, customers or partners can securely access critical applications and data from any Web-enabled device - all without pre-installed client software or application updates.

"It gave us the flexibility to truly have your PC work like a node -- a direct line in -- when workers were at a remote location," Balch said. "We also liked the familiar look and feel that FirePass gave us. You could be at remote location miles away, on a remote device, but the computer screen would look like you were working directly off the office server right at your desk."

The set up and on-going maintenance, or lack thereof, of the appliance-based product was also attractive to CVM.

"I can honestly say that is one of the very few products that we just plugged in and had work. The box arrived, and within a couple of hours we had it up and running. The best thing about it is that nobody has to think about it. We didn't have to perform log-in scripts for people to dial into the Internet, establish connections through the VPN, start the VPN - we didn't have to do any of that for people any more."

And according to Balch, it's the positive response from user's out in the field that makes FirePass a winner.

"'Finally, this just works' - that was the main compliment I heard from people out in the field," stated Balch. "People caught on how to use it very quickly, too, so training time was minimal. It's allowed the partners and senior staff here to leave a 5 o'clock, deal with what they need to do, and if they've got pressing issues, they can log back on (to the network) after the kids have gone to bed and not have to drive back into the office. We're very happy with it."

About F5

As the pioneer and global leader in Application Traffic Management, F5 continues to lead the industry by driving more intelligence into the network to deliver advanced application agility. F5 products ensure the secure and optimized delivery of applications to any user - anywhere. Through its flexible and cohesive architecture, F5 delivers unmatched value by dramatically improving the way organizations serve their employees, customers and constituents, while lowering operational costs.