



### Customer Profile

**Company Name:**

Santa Barbara Charter

**Location:**

Santa Barbara, CA

**Industry:**

Travel

**Web site:**

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

**FirePass Highlights:**

- Set up in less than 30 minutes
- Decreased support time by 10 hours a month
- Eliminated user frustration in connecting to critical information while on the road

**About Santa Barbara Charter**

Santa Barbara Charter is one of California's premier private chartering services for both business and recreational travelers.

## Santa Barbara Charter Relies On FirePass 600 For Easy, Reliable Pilot Access To Airline Scheduling From Any Location

### Executive Summary

Santa Barbara Charter gives customers what no other major airline can offer: a custom tailored flight with all the requested amenities. To guarantee the quality of a flight, the charter company relies on a system of detailed scheduling, including the number of passengers and their luggage, customers' catering preferences, and car rental reservations. Consequently, reliable remote access to the schedule between flights when at airports or hotels is imperative, particularly for the pilots. Santa Barbara Charter employs F5's FirePass 600 SSL VPN as an affordable and effective method for ensuring constant and secure access to their server and the critical information it contains.

### Challenge

With more than 20,000 airports to choose from, the pilots of Santa Barbara Charter find themselves each week in a variety of hotels and airports. To stay in touch with their schedule, pilots require a remote access solution capable of functioning under a wide range of Internet security measures. Since only two hours advance notice is required to book a flight, a reliable and consistent connection is paramount for the charter company's success.

Prior to using FirePass, Santa Barbara Charter tried several different ways to link their "on the road" personnel with the server. They attempted using an IPSec VPN, but because of different firewalls and Internet safeguards common to hotels and airports, the IPSec VPN method worked in some places and not in others -- even when users were traveling within the same hotel chain. Pilot Mike Healey, for example, would spend hours trying to navigate through hotel firewalls in preparation for the next day's flight -- and joked that he started keeping track of which hotels he could connect at and which ones he could not.

In addition to an IPSec VPN, the charter company also tried using a thin-client remote access solution. They encountered similar results as they did with IPSec, as well as additional complications. For example, when users established a connection with the thin-client remote process, they could see the schedule and their emails but the data itself stayed on the server. After the session, unless the information was cut and pasted into a new document, schedule updates and email were not saved on the pilots' laptops - resulting in lost time. Security was also a primary concern.

"When someone was traveling, I would almost always get calls," said Brenda Terry, IT Administrator for Santa Barbara Charter. "I quickly had to come up with some pretty creative ways to solve the access problem, which was frustrating both to me and the users."

Yet despite even the noblest efforts, linking with the server occasionally became an impossible task. Neil Myers, President of Santa Barbara Charter, recalls an instance when he spent an entire evening trying to hook up to the server in preparation for a meeting the next day. "I was on the phone for hours, including hotel IT," said Myers. "In the end, it didn't work and I went unprepared."

After dealing with remote access dilemmas for too long, Santa Barbara Charter decided to look into alternatives. To relieve their trouble with



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obtaining consistent secure access to their server, the charter business chose to implement F5's FirePass 600 SSL VPN as an affordable and practical remedy.

### Solution

By employing FirePass 600, pilots now gain access to the server using a SSL VPN in conjunction with their standard web browser. The method lets remote users link through a web-based interface to the FirePass 600 controller. The controller, a box roughly the size of a hard bound book, then checks the authenticity of the user and connects them with Santa Barbara Charter's server.

Since the technology supports multiple platforms and requires only a web browser and an Internet connection to function, traveling employees gain access to the server virtually anywhere. "Once, while at the Salt Lake City airport, I was without my laptop," said Myers. "So, I went to a kiosk there, typed in the URL and set up FirePass."

The hotel and airport firewalls that normally blocked Myers and his colleagues' attempts to access the flight schedule no longer encumber the charter company because of the SSL encryption functionality FirePass utilizes. Standard HTTPS protocol supports SSL transport and all public access points and private LANs; and networks permit HTTP proxies. Not all networks, however, allow for IPSec and other remote access proxies.

Besides increasing accessibility, the SSL protocol brings with it a few other advantages. Before FirePass, Terry constantly received complaints of how slow the connection speeds were. Large attachments frequently bogged down the link and often caused the connection to lock up.

"FirePass streamlines everything," said Terry. "Because SSL compresses and encrypts data, information travels faster and we can securely access large amounts of data, which is good in a business environment."

"My computer used to lock up all the time," said Healey. "I would have to call IT and sometimes wait more than an hour before I could finally connect. With FirePass, there are no more lock-ups."

The SSL protocol is also one of the reasons why user software does not need to be loaded onto each machine within Santa Barbara Charter's network. All web browsers support HTTPS; therefore, no FirePass software needs to be installed on users' computers. In fact, since all web browsers support SSL, the pilots can access the server using any web enabled device -- from desktops to pocket PCs.

Healey appreciates the ease of FirePass as well. Thanks to a reliable method of remote access, he no longer worries about having to link to the server and can focus more on flying. "The simplicity of FirePass is really nice," said Healey. "Your computer works just like normal and you don't even know FirePass is there."

But nobody welcomes the simplicity of FirePass more than Terry. Other remote access techniques took hours, sometimes days to set up and fine tune, but she still would get calls from frustrated users. With FirePass, Terry completed setting up and testing in less than three hours, and subsequently decreased support time by 10 hours a month.

"The longest process," said Terry "was getting the SSL secure server certificate. A beginning level network engineer can easily set it up in less than 30 minutes. It's very user friendly."

Implementing FirePass relieves some of Terry's network security headaches as well. With her administrator login, Terry defines which security precautions, patches and service packs remote computers must employ to gain access to the server. If a user tries linking to the server using a computer with sub-par security settings, FirePass will deny the user access.

Furthermore, as an administrator, Terry can view detailed reports containing the entry logs of remote users. Terry can also monitor who is linked to the server, determine how long they have been connected, send messages to users and even disconnect a user.



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Needless to say, Terry and other employees at Santa Barbara Charter are pleased with their new remote access solution.

"FirePass is the only solution that has worked consistently," said Terry. "It's the easiest to set up and manage and fits perfectly with all of our needs."

### About F5

F5 enables organizations to successfully deliver business-critical applications and gives them the greatest level of agility to stay ahead of growing business demands. 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. Over 6,000 organizations and service providers worldwide trust F5 to keep their businesses running. The company is headquartered in Seattle, Washington with offices worldwide. For more information go to [www.f5.com](http://www.f5.com).