NETWORK HARDWARE REFRESH & UPGRADE: Energy

Client:
Electric and Natural Gas Utility

Industry Background:
Power utilities must become more agile and efficient in response to the accelerated pace of change in that industry sector. In addition to more reliable and secure electric grids and other infrastructure, these organizations need digital business models that connect people and assets and enable the flow of information. This in turn requires an up-to-date network infrastructure that can support ever-increasing data volumes and has the resilience to meet business continuity requirements.

Project Summary:
An electric and natural gas utility serving more than 5 million customers needed to upgrade the network infrastructure that supported its online billing and payment system. The utility was also looking to expand its network into six colocation facilities in multiple U.S. cities. In addition to greater redundancy and resilience, the colocation facilities provided tighter physical security controls for the networking equipment.

The utility's value-added reseller (VAR) partner designed a solution based upon core routing and switching equipment from Cisco, which provided high levels of availability and scalability. The solution also included F5 firewalls for rock-solid security. The VAR called on SirviS to handle the implementation of the equipment in the colocation facilities.

SirviS has extensive experience in the design, integration and deployment of enterprise-class networks, and the technical resources needed to install equipment virtually anywhere in the world. The VAR also leaned heavily on SirviS's ability to handle the structured cabling component of the project.

Project Specifics:
The VAR configured the equipment in its lab but did not have the resources or geographic footprint to handle the deployment. SirviS was asked to receive, uncrate, install and test the networking gear at each colocation facility, and install structured cabling between the racks.

The implementation had to be completed in a short timeframe without causing any downtime for the utility's billing and payment system. The SirviS team spent a couple of months planning the project and then executed the entire implementation in about 30 days. The aggressive project schedule allowed for only three days at each of the sites, which were located in different parts of the U.S.

The project also required the installation of large amounts of both copper and fiber-optic cabling. The SirviS team ensured that the cabling was performed according to industry best practices to simplify management and troubleshooting and future extension of the network.

The SirviS team hit a severe winter snowstorm in Minnesota, which made travel to that colocation facility difficult. Nevertheless, SirviS was still able to meet all project deadlines and due dates.

Results:
SirviS had the unique ability to mobilize the technical resources needed to complete a complex project over a wide geographic area in an extremely short timeframe. SirviS also had the structured cabling expertise to deliver a turnkey solution. Based upon SirviS's outstanding work deploying the networking equipment, the customer has asked SirviS to participate in the expansion of its enterprise environment.