

Riverbed Steelhead Beats Cisco WAAS

Examples of Customer Wins

RIVERBED CONSISTENTLY BEATS CISCO WAAS

Cisco continues to try to compete in the WAN optimization space but their results have been less than exemplary. Cisco is not just losing deals to new customers due to WAAS products' poor performance, difficult deployment, and inconsistent support but also losing *existing* WAAS customers who realized that WAAS is just too painful to use in their organizations. Information represented here is collected by various means, and as such, specific details on wins vary from case to case.

Customers that chose Riverbed over Cisco in competitive bake-offs

A Top 5 Auto Manufacturer: This division of an international company employs more than 25,000 employees. More than 100,000 workers are employed at authorized automobile, motorcycle and power-equipment dealerships in the United States. The Riverbed/Cisco bake-off was performed in a lab environment using a Shunra WAN simulator. They tested Cisco first and immediately had issues with configuration as well as performance. They tested Cisco for nearly 45 days and then brought in Riverbed. They chose Riverbed Steelhead due to its better performance and because the product could scale better in the data center, even using in-line deployment options.

A F500 Industrial Company – A Fortune 500 company focused on materials, packaging, and machinery, this company was planning to simply purchase Cisco WAAS through their existing Cisco relationship. After learning about the Riverbed Steelhead product line, the company decided to issue an RFI to Cisco and Riverbed. Just three weeks after first learning about Riverbed, the company decided that Steelhead appliances were the best choice for their business based on the speed, scale, and simplicity that we offer customers.

A Top APAC Financial Services Company: This bank in Australia did a detailed competitive analysis in preparation for its Exchange server consolidation project. Despite testing Cisco WAAS 4.1, and being barraged with competitive FUD, the bank chose Riverbed as the best solution to ensure Exchange performance.

Boomerangs: Customers who replaced Cisco WAAS with Riverbed recently

A global business advisory firm: This Riverbed customer is a leading global business advisory firm that helps clients address high-impact business challenges in an increasingly complex legal, regulatory, and economic landscape. In September of 2009, they installed Cisco WAAS to 14 locations in their enterprise. While they originally anticipated that WAAS would help address network performance problems, after they deployed WAAS there was minimal difference or improvement in the end-user experience. A significant portion of the firm's network was comprised of encrypted MAPI/Exchange traffic, which WAAS could not optimize, causing no significant reduction in their bandwidth utilization. And a more frustrating aspect of WAAS was the instability of the software - requiring a significant amount of time to support by installing new software patches issued by Cisco to resolve various bugs and other issues.

However, one of the IT directors was hired from a company that used Riverbed, and this director knew that the Steelhead products required significantly less time and effort to operate and maintain, and could optimize a greater number of applications. In early 2011, the firm decided removed all their WAAS devices and deployed Riverbed. One of the attributes they found most attractive was the Steelhead appliance integration with Shark Pilot, and the Steelhead Mobile software client product that interoperates with the same Steelhead appliance deployed in the data center. This latter observation was particularly important because many of the firm's engagements are on-site at the customer location where they need WAN optimization. They also liked the fact that the same Steelhead appliance software image was used for both disaster recovery and branch office WAN optimization, and they did not need separate software builds and physical appliances for each of these purposes – a requirement for WAAS.

Major power supply company: This company is the eighth largest natural gas distribution utility in the United States, and the largest supplier in the Southeast US. They initially deployed WAAS in late 2008 because they perceived Cisco to be the safe vendor. They originally intended to deploy WAAS to a large number of locations. However, after deploying WAAS devices to only 7 locations, problems started occurring, and they were unable to deploy additional WAAS units. For the few sites that did receive WAAS devices, performance was far below expectations. Cisco informed this customer that they would have to deploy additional WAAS units to the data center in order to scale, because the per-peer data store design had fragmented the available storage capacity of the one WAAS device that was deployed there. Instead, the customer turned to Riverbed, who replaced all WAAS devices. The Riverbed solution performed so well that this company is planning to deploy additional Steelhead appliances to well beyond the original 7 locations, as well as to optimize data transfers for disaster recovery (DR).

Global steel company: The steel company has purchased 50 WAAS appliances for their major operational and fabrication sites to optimize their existing bandwidth and offer consistent application performance for its 1,000 employees around the world. The steel company also wanted to replicate their NetApp Snap Mirror data between their data centers and reduce their RTO. The team had the WAAS solution in its network for 20 months and consistently ran into stability issues, which went against their goals of building a consistent user experience. The company has WAAS appliances in their two data centers, one main office and had also had the WAAS ISR blades at operational and fabrications sites.

Their CIO decided to look at the Riverbed solution and did a POC, at two of their data centers, and one of their main offices. After the POC, the CIO and the networking team selected Steelheads for their ease of set up, management, performance of their web applications and the most important criteria, stability of their network. Today, the steel company has invested in 40 Steelhead appliances and plans to deploy over 100 appliances in the future.

A major US power company: This clean energy company serves 21 states in the US and Canada. In 2008, the power company deployed about 30 WAAS devices throughout their network. After the WAAS deployment, network outages began happening with regular frequency, and the outages were only resolved by rebooting the WAAS devices. Cisco support was unable to identify the root cause of the WAAS problem, and was therefore unable to stop the WAAS devices from causing repeated disruptions to the network. This became a serious issue because each of the network outages jeopardized revenue by preventing their energy traders from performing transactions. Finally, outages started peaking in late 2010 when the company finally decided to investigate the possibility of deploying Riverbed to replace their WAAS devices.

The company started the process by requesting evaluation Steelhead units from Riverbed. However, during the evaluation period the evaluation Steelhead units were quickly pressed into production to replace misbehaving WAAS devices. The Steelhead units performed so well in the production network that all WAAS units were immediately removed and replaced by Steelheads. Today, the company has purchased and deployed 30 Steelheads to replace their previous WAAS devices, and they plan to purchase 60 more Steelhead devices for deployment to all remaining plant locations.

A Nationwide Non-profit: This non-profit replaced a double-digit Cisco WAAS deployment after performance and reliability did not meet their needs. In fact, during an attempted software upgrade over the WAN, WAAS brought the complete network down. They instead deployed Steelhead appliances for a more robust WAN optimization solution across their enterprise. They also used Steelhead Mobile for two very small offices as well as workers who travel.

A Global Retail Company: One of the largest retailer-owned cooperatives, with more than 5000 independent entrepreneur-retailers deployed 13 WAAS appliances in their data center, headquarters, distribution centers, and regional offices. The network team recalled that deployment was a very tedious and difficult 3-month-long process that required them to hire a consultant. But even after the WAAS deployment was completed, end-users did not notice performance benefits.

In 2010 when Cisco advised retailer to upgrade their WAAS devices because their existing devices were no longer supported, the retailer decided to look to Riverbed instead. Immediately the IT team noticed a number of benefits in the Riverbed solution, including significantly faster performance for applications that previously did not experience any performance benefit from WAAS. The storage manager noticed his Compellent SAN replication application finished in half the amount of time it previously took before Riverbed was deployed. Key business applications including web, Citrix ICA, and FTP file transfers from remote offices were significantly faster with Riverbed. Today, the retailer has deployed 3 clustered Steelhead 2050 appliances in their

data center and 12 other appliances in their regional offices.

An Independent Investment Management Firm: Headquartered in the Midwest, an international firm deployed Cisco WAAS to 17 locations because they had perceived it to be the “safe” choice. However, after deployment they had nothing for issues for the 12 months that it was deployed. They experienced a variety of different issues, including WAAS platform failures, regular connection hangs, broken applications, and generally poor performance.

The firm decided they had enough in late 2009 and replaced their WAAS devices with the Riverbed Steelhead solution. After some initial troubleshooting during the deployment, the Steelhead appliances worked as promised. The Steelhead solution has been in place for almost two years, and the firm has not experienced the problems that plagued the earlier WAAS deployment.

A US Hedge Fund: This Fund is an independent, multi-product investment management firm founded in 1994 that currently manages approximately \$30.6 billion in assets. Early in 2008, The Fund chose WAAS because of a lower price and additional free gear offered by Cisco; despite the fact that the IT team believed that Riverbed was technically superior. The Fund had deployed a handful of WAAS appliances but had consistent problems with management and performance of the devices. After testing WAAS v4.1.1 and experiencing continued problems, the Fund chose Riverbed for both its award-winning Steelhead appliance and Steelhead mobile software. Combined, these products provided the Fund a complete solution for the branch office, data center, and mobile worker.

A Major Insurance Provider: As one of the largest insurance companies in the world, this company has a highly distributed workforce. Having originally deployed Cisco WAAS, the company found that their performance results were not adequate. Working with their service provider, AT&T, the company chose Riverbed Steelhead appliances and the Steelhead Central Management Console as the new corporate WAN optimization standard for the business.