

How Cisco IT Uses Extranets to Connect Global Partners to Cisco

Cost-effective menu of link architectures provides secure, reliable connections for Cisco partners.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Enhanced security
- Improved quality
- Reduced costs for WAN circuits
- Eliminated hardware costs
- Accelerated implementation
- Faster short-term extranet connectivity

“With access to Cisco network resources, partners can manufacture with the same quality we do here.”

– Nordquist, ISG Project Manager

A guiding strategy for Cisco Systems is to focus on its core business while outsourcing context, or non-core, activities to partners. But to successfully outsource ongoing functions such as manufacturing, engineering, finance, technical support, and advanced network services, Cisco needed more secure affordable connectivity between its own network and partner sites. This extranet would serve as the lifeline between Cisco and its partners.

The challenge was in providing partners with extranet access to internal Cisco resources without compromising Cisco security. But such a strategy can be costly, complex, and unwieldy to manage. Some companies address this challenge by duplicating all the resources that partners need and placing them in a secure network connected to the Internet behind a firewall in what’s called a “demilitarized zone,” or DMZ.

Cisco’s Internet Services Group chose to build a separate and secure managed network access for each partner protected by Access Control lists (ACLs). The extranet strategy addresses three types of connectivity requirements: partner access to the Cisco network; Cisco access to customer extranets; and reciprocal network access between Cisco and its partners. Depending on partner requirements, Cisco deploys one of three types of extranet connections: leased line, site-to-site VPN, or user-based VPN.

Today, the Cisco extranet network provides a secure, highly available connection to the Cisco intranet for companies that supply Cisco with manufacturing, software development, and call center functions, as well as financial, legal, fulfillment, marketing, and publications services.

“Strategic extranets present unlimited business opportunity, allowing large enterprises in virtually every industry to generate revenue, increase customer and partner loyalty, and drive competitive advantage.” – International Data Group (IDG) Today, ISG supports about 200 extranets globally. About 30 percent of Cisco’s extranet partners provide manufacturing services and are fully integrated into Cisco supply chain applications and processes. Partners can access needed data and communications without breaching Cisco security.

Case Study: http://www.cisco.com/web/about/ciscoatatwork/case_studies/routing_dl4.html

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To read the entire case study or for additional Cisco IT case studies on a variety of business solutions, visit Cisco on Cisco: Inside Cisco IT www.cisco.com/go/ciscoit

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