

# Delivering Security and Agility at Everyy with Cisco SD-Access

Cisco® Customer Experience and ConvergeOne team to deliver a production implementation in just 18 months



## Customer Objective

- Update hardware, improve segmentation, and continue to improve security
- Better leverage in-house skills to support next-generation network
- Streamline performance and management of the network
- Minimize downtime or delays

## Cisco and ConvergeOne Solution

- Design and implementation services to support Cisco SD-Access and Cisco DNA Center™
- Solution Support service enables fast resolution of network issues
- [Cisco Firepower® NGFW](#) enhances security
- [Cisco Catalyst® 9x00 Series Switches](#) designed for Cisco DNA and SD-Access

## Business Outcome

- New future-ready network scales performance and simplifies secure access
- Met aggressive roll-out schedule with confidence
- Enterprise firewall and consistent device security minimize risk
- Reduced by 40% the time spent by techs on break-fix

## Growing utility proactively plans for performance and security

To position the company for success in a changing industry, Evergy completed a merger in 2018 that combined Westar Energy and Great Plains Energy (owner of Kansas City Power and Light) into a single larger business. Evergy is a Fortune 500 company that now serves two million residential, commercial, and industrial customers across Kansas and Missouri. Its operations span more than 13,700 miles of transmission lines, and the company has 11,566 Megawatts of owned power generation.

“Our customers, including police, hospitals, and the good people of Kansas and Missouri, depend on us to literally keep the lights on,” says Chris Hubbell, senior manager information security at Evergy. “And emergency services and businesses, they all depend on us to keep their services reliable, keep the machines running, keep the food cold, and to keep their personal information safe.” With so much at stake, maximizing the reliability and security of the network that supports its key business processes is essential.

However, Evergy faced numerous challenges. It needed to update hardware, improve segmentation, and continue to improve security. Composed of components from a variety of different vendors, it was difficult to manage and could not deliver the performance and reliability that end-customers required. The utility was also planning a merger, and the existing infrastructure would be difficult to integrate with new sites and components.

To get out in front of these issues, Evergy launched an initiative to revitalize and redesign its data network. The organization’s CEO specified one primary requirement: isolation of devices and people from one another to enable greater security. The organization needed a leading-edge networking solution that could deliver security, scalability, and speed.

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**Chris Hubbell,**  
Senior Manager Information Security at Evergy

## Building a software-defined network for the future

Evergy issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to a variety of technology vendors, all of whom recommended a solution based on Virtual Routing and Forwarding (VRF). Although VRF offers performance and security advantages, it can also create administrative issues. The more segments in the network, the heavier the burden of managing VRFs.

Cisco and ConvergeOne, a leading global IT services provider of cloud collaboration and customer experience technology solutions, offered an alternate approach. They proposed a Software-Defined Access (SD-Access) model that delivers policy-based automation using Cisco Identity Services Engine (ISE) and Cisco DNA. “We did our homework and concluded that this approach would deliver a better security infrastructure than VRFs,” says Hubbell.

With the Cisco SD-Access model, device provisioning and security access are greatly simplified. When a new device is provisioned to the network, Cisco DNA automatically identifies the device type and assigns the right security profile. Only authorized individuals and devices can connect to the network. As Evergy moves devices or people within the network, their security profiles move with them. A security matrix is the foundation of these protections, determining which security groups can talk with others.

## Service-based solution enhances speed and security

Working under a very aggressive project schedule, the Cisco Customer Experience (CX) team and ConvergeOne collaborated closely with Evergy to design and implement the best possible solution. Cisco DNA and Cisco ISE offered significant flexibility, making it easy to align the solution to the utility’s specific needs.

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Cisco experts provided design guidance and network segmentation architecture, and worked closely with ConvergeOne who deployed Cisco switches, routers, and Cisco DNA Center appliances. Together, Cisco and its partner helped Evergy properly design its security policies and build a stable network that would meet its performance objectives. Offering deep expertise and foresight about potential issues the energy provider might encounter, Cisco and ConvergeOne helped Evergy avoid common pitfalls. Together, they completed both the pilot and production implementation in less than 18 months.

Evergy began rolling its new SD-Access solution out to beta sites at the end of 2018 and has completed deployment of approximately 45 percent of the solution, with 65 percent completion projected by the end of 2019.

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As its next-generation infrastructure takes shape, Evergy is already realizing the benefits promised in the original proposal. The firm is now more agile and more secure using SD-Access and Cisco DNA. With consistent device security, together with enterprise firewall protection, the organization can minimize risk and safeguard sensitive company and consumer data.

“With SD-Access and Cisco DNA, it’s easier to resolve issues,” says Hubbell. “Senior staff is spending 40-percent less time with break-fix, and more time with new applications.”

The new Cisco solution has also positioned Evergy to support a converged infrastructure across multiple sites as it continues to seek efficiencies through its merger. With the first site in production, the next step is to roll out the SD-Access solution to the former Kansas City Power and Light infrastructure, allowing the benefits of SD-Access to be magnified.

“Cisco DNA and SD-Access is clearly the direction that is eventually coming to everybody,” says Hubbell.

With help from Cisco Customer Experience and ConvergeOne, Evergy has successfully adopted a modern, flexible, and scalable infrastructure in just 18 months. The solution based on Cisco DNA and SD-Access gives Evergy the adaptability and security it needs to fulfill its mission of empowering a better future for residents and businesses in Kansas and Missouri.

## For more information

To find out more about Cisco Customer Experience and how we can accelerate your success, check out our ebook, [Accelerate Your Journey to Intent-Based Networking With Cisco Customer Experience](#).

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