Large U.S. utility transforms with cloud strategy and iboss

Company realizes significant cost savings and improved productivity while connecting users and apps to the cloud

About the Customer

1.5 million

customers in service area

10,000+

miles of power lines

2,000+

employees

Introduction

This utility is one of the largest in the United States with a focus on innovative energy programs, renewable power and sustainable solutions for a healthier environment. This fully integrated company offers generation, transmission, and distribution for more than 1.5 million customers. An iboss customer since 2018, they have embraced a full cloud strategy that has transformed its business.

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CIO

The Challenge

The utility industry faces exciting transformations as shifts continue toward solar, wind and other renewable energy sources. As changes occur, companies need to consider how to maintain critical infrastructure, address the demand on utilities and provide remote access to employees. A June 2021 Accenture article states that utility leaders need to become change agents and adopt digital innovative strategies and leave behind the "old, risk-averse, asset-based, engineering culture it has developed over decades." Innovative leadership is required to push the sector forward.

These imperatives were top-of-mind with the Chief Information Officer of a large U.S. utility. "I had a cloud-first mentality when I took on my role," he states, with a goal to increase efficiency and add mobility for employees in the field and the corporate office. Mobile field workers, for example, previously received their schedules on paper, leading to time-consuming, manual workloads even when fixing outages and downed lines. As the CIO explains, it was difficult to sustain an on-prem strategy for all systems, especially in the utility industry.

The company aimed to streamline and modernize processes while complying to regulatory requirements, regardless of an employee's location or device, without the slow and unpredictable nature of VPNs. After a thorough evaluation in 2018, they realized iboss provided the flexibility and scalability to securely provide employees access to apps in the cloud at any time, from anywhere and from virtually any device.

The Solution

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We wouldn't have been able to effectively move almost 1500 endpoints without the
solutions we put in place – which includes iboss.*

CIO

In 2019, the utility adopted a full cloud transformation including the iboss Cloud Platform to securely connect its users to any application, from anywhere. With many of the company's services in the cloud today, using a VPN doesn't fit its business model. "We've had tremendous success with iboss. Our users tell us the process is seamless," the CIO continues. "Our cyber engineers in the Security Operations Center have visibility to the network and our users, and we can enforce our policies across the board for onsite and offsite staff."

Shifting to a cloud strategy included implementing Microsoft 365 and moving all ERP, HR and supply chain solutions to the cloud. The organization consistently filters traffic in the cloud with iboss while its 2500 employees easily access systems and apps without a VPN. A cloud-based approach allowed the utility to securely manage scheduling for 700 field workers via mobile devices, effectively eliminating the previous manual system saving millions of dollars in productivity gains. Regardless of the device used – iPads, Windows 10 machines or mobile phones – all can securely connect to the network. Further, outages can be addressed and documented remotely, along with annual line patrols. The company has a single pane of glass and can conduct SSL decryption while providing uninterrupted security to every employee.

When COVID-19 struck, the company was well prepared to move almost 1500 employees offsite within 48 hours including 150 call center staff members. As of today, all call center employees are working from home with secure cloud connectivity from iboss. The company has realized a significant increase in responsiveness and productivity as a result. "We're very fortunate we made this transformation and pushed our security to the cloud," the CIO explains. "We wouldn't have been able to effectively move almost 1500 endpoints without the solutions we put in place – which includes iboss."

The Results

There is a huge opportunity for utilities to optimize, be far more efficient, and utilize technology like iboss. Our Board of Directors and executives are very pleased.

CIO

The organization realized significant benefits with a cloud-first strategy and iboss. With staff being able to access the systems and information needed from the field, the CIO estimates his company has saved tens of millions of dollars in productivity and overtime. The utility reduced the time it took to get service to a customer's home, manage lines or perform upgrades from 15 to 2 days. "We wouldn't have been able to do this through a VPN or via manual processes. Obviously, iboss was a huge factor in our success," the customer states.

A large percentage of staff will remain offsite moving forward, including virtually all call center employees. The utility reduced office space expenditures while gaining functionality and scalability, even when moving new employees onto the platform. Moreover, the company is reconsidering a large capital expenditure on a new office building now that many employees work remotely. Eliminating this spend can reduce rates for customers and create a positive impact throughout the organization.

"When I talk to my peers in the industry, they had issues moving offsite. Many utilities had to make huge investments to do so as they didn't have the automated systems we do," the CIO concludes. "There is a huge opportunity for utilities to optimize, be far more efficient, and utilize technology like iboss. Our Board of Directors and executives are very pleased."

Highlights

Tens of millions of dollars saved in productivity and overtime. Reduced the time it took to get service to a customer's home, manage lines or perform upgrades from 15 to 2 days.

Security processes are streamlined and modernized while complying to regulatory requirements, regardless of an employee's location or device, without the slow and unpredictable nature of VPNs.

Full cloud transformation including the iboss Cloud Platform enables users to securely connect to any application, from anywhere.

Microsoft 365, ERP, HR and supply chain solutions all managed in the cloud.

700 field workers can securely manage scheduling and workloads in the cloud, resulting in improved responsiveness and productivity.

Almost 1500 employees moved offsite within 48 hours in March 2020, including 150 call center staff.

About iboss

With over 4,000 customers, including the largest government, financial, insurance, energy, and technology organizations, iboss provides users direct and secure access to cloud applications from wherever they work. iboss transitions organizations from protecting in-office workers to protecting the modern work-from-anywhere workforce while providing fast, secure, and direct connections to cloud applications to increase productivity and protect organizations from malware and data loss. A Gartner Magic Quadrant "Visionary", and backed by 230+ issued and pending patents, iboss processes and secures over 150 billion daily network transactions globally and has built the largest containerized cloud security fabric. The iboss Government Cloud Platform enables agencies to modernize their architecture, by reducing the dependency or eliminating the need for traditional network security appliances that are no longer effective at protecting today's hybrid workforce. Jumpstart your SASE transformation and experience the future of cloud security today at http://www.iboss.com.