

Gil Moore Oil 'Fills Up' on Failover With Mako Networks

There's a constant drive in business to reduce costs, improve efficiencies, and ensure that technology is being used to the best of its capabilities. Such was the case for Chris Moore, Vice President of the Gil Moore Oil Company, when he was searching for ways to better leverage technology at his gas stations in Livermore and Sacramento, California.

"OUR GOAL FOR THESE STATIONS WAS TO OPERATE AS efficiently as possible," Chris said. "We had been running both stores since 2000 and we wanted to make the right upgrades to ensure we were getting the most for our money."

Both locations were fairly large gas stations: eight pumps (with 16 fueling positions) out front, an attached convenience store and quick service restaurant, and a small back office for managing the site. But that setup belied an even more complicated technical infrastructure; there were separate systems for the pumps and payments, ATM, fire alarms, security cameras, phone lines and office computers.

"That's just the way it was done back then. We had 10 phone lines at each store to connect and network the systems," said Chris.

But big changes were on the way. Instead of using a mail courier to transfer bills and invoices between locations, the Gil Moore company would install a scanning system to share documents online. The back office PCs would get an upgraded software suite to help manage store operations at both locations. The ATM machines would start using the Internet to process withdrawals and transactions instead of traditional phone lines.

And the slow, expensive satellite connection on the roof would go too. Chris had thought it was their only choice, until he found Mako Networks and realized all his changes could be facilitated with a smarter, more reliable network that cost less while allowing him to do more. Plus, Mako is fully certified under the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS),

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providing Chris with reassurance that his customers' credit and debit card data is being handled properly.

All of Gil Moore's systems – credit/debit card payments, important back office tasks, and more – could be run over the DSL connection Chris already had in place instead of divided up across many expensive duplicate connections.

Mako uses a single broadband link to network his back office, security cameras, payments, and auxiliary systems instead of the 10 phone lines and separate satellite connection.

In case there was a disruption on the DSL line, Chris also gained a fast and reliable cellular connection that could serve as an automatic backup.

"When our satellite connection went down, it would stay down for hours. Sometimes just having snow on the dish could disrupt the signal," Chris said. "When I was introduced to Mako, I immediately liked the concept and the backup redundancy. The solution has really been great for us."



Before, when the satellite system was down, there was no way for Chris to accept card payments in real time. His options were to either ‘store it forward’, where the system would simply record the card details and reconcile the transaction when the satellite finally came back online, or, as an even less appealing alternative, simply stop taking card payments. Considering that nearly 80 percent of all transactions at gas stations are done via debit or credit card, being unable to accept cards would seriously damage his business.

With Mako, if the broadband connection goes down the system automatically switches to use a built-in mobile data connection to process card transactions and keep data flowing. When the broadband is restored, the system returns to its original state. This ‘failover’ connection assures that the Gil Moore Oil Company can always take card payments.

“We haven’t had to turn a single customer away since switching to Mako,” said Chris.

But the Mako System is more than just a backup connection for the Gil Moore company’s payments traffic. It also provides Chris secure remote network access at each location from one central point. He’s using technology to bridge the distance between his stores, creating efficiencies with a simple, secure cloud-managed network.

In addition, the Mako Central Management System supplies Chris with a steady stream of reports and data about how his network is being used, and alerts him to any unusual events.

For example, Chris uses Mako’s bandwidth reporting to monitor how much Internet traffic his Livermore

store uses. Every time his backup connection kicks in, Chris receives an email alert letting him know about the failover event, and he receives another when the primary connection kicks back in. As a result, he now knows more about his network activity than ever before.

“The failover status alerts are phenomenal,” said Chris. “I always know the status of my network, and if there’s a problem it lets me know.”

In short, the Gil Moore Oil Company has gained more powerful technology at a lower overall monthly cost, with the peace-of-mind that comes with a fast reliable backup.

“The Mako solution’s been great for us,” says Chris. “I’d recommend the system to any other station operator. It’s certainly made a difference at mine.”

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