

## SUCCESS STORY

# DELIVERING STRATEGIC IT DIRECTION AND COMPREHENSIVE MANAGED IT SERVICES at Hallaton Environmental Linings



## What Data Networks Did for Hallaton Environmental Linings

- Made instant architectural improvements leveraging expertise in Juniper Networks equipment and servicing applications.
- Created a state-of-the-art cloud environment for applications and data with inherent reliability and convenience.
- Became not only a world-class MSP for Hallaton, but also a valued strategic planner and solution provider.

## Abstract

Hallaton Environmental Linings partnered with Data Networks for managed IT services, which began with an overhaul of their outdated IT infrastructure and improvements to their cybersecurity. Leveraging Juniper Networks equipment and other modern solutions, Data Networks created a robust cloud environment and implemented comprehensive support systems. This partnership not only improved the reliability and efficiency of Hallaton's IT, but also established Data Networks as a strategic IT advisor, enabling Hallaton to focus on core business operations.

## The challenge

Hallaton Environmental Linings ("Hallaton") is a leading installer of geosynthetic lining material products such as landfill caps, floating reservoir covers, and other containment solutions. The company is based in the Baltimore, Maryland area, and serves customers across multiple industries. Hallaton employs 150 people, of which 30 use Microsoft 365 and other technology daily.

Prior to partnering with Data Networks, Hallaton received technology services from a different MSP. This relationship had been long-standing, but it became clear that Hallaton's needs were no longer aligned with their MSP's ability to provide sufficient support and guidance. Their technology infrastructure was outdated, all data was hosted off-premises without backups, and cybersecurity was not prioritized. Hallaton President Todd Harman believed he needed to switch MSPs to help the company achieve the business success that its people and products could achieve. "We don't have any full-time information technology staff and were having many problems over time. For example, our employees couldn't reliably access files and data from our provider's data center due to frequent connection problems. So, I was interested in making a change. Data Networks caught my attention and sold me with a great MSP program that could help us grow our business."

## The solution

Data Networks relies on a proven methodology to onboard new MSP customers and quickly become a trusted partner. While every client is unique, the initial implementation at Hallaton followed the approach used with all Data Networks customers. "We believe in configuring our customers similarly in terms of technology architecture and processes, tailored to specific requirements as needed. This helps simplify and quicken our ability to deliver support," says Harry Serra, Data Networks' Technology Alignment Engineer (TAM) for Hallaton.

To begin, Data Networks engineers visited Hallaton on site for an initial assessment. This included an inventory of all infrastructure, computing devices, Microsoft application licenses, and collection of user access level data. The team also spoke with key stakeholders and observed employee activity to understand the current obstacles Hallaton encountered. It was clear to both Data Networks engineers and Hallaton stakeholders that virtually everything needed to be transformed. This required a significant investment from Hallaton, but according to Harman, "The Data Networks engineers who visited came back to us with a meticulous plan that would dramatically improve our situation. They also explained to me in convincing fashion how all parts of the solution were going to work cohesively."

Before standing up its Service Desk, a core offering, Data Networks engineers needed to upgrade all existing hardware and network infrastructure. While routine improvements like installation of new workstations were made for all employees, the Data Networks team focused a lot of attention on replacing old network gear with Juniper Networks equipment. Data Networks engineers are well-versed in the reliable enterprise-class solutions from Juniper Networks.

At Hallaton, one Juniper Networks SRX320 firewall, two Juniper EX2300 switches, and six Juniper AP33 and one AP63 wireless access points (WAPs) were installed. "Not only is Juniper Networks equipment top-notch, but Juniper also offers lots of different options. This gives Data Networks the flexibility to match our clients' size in terms of data volume and throughput needs with the correct Juniper models. When Hallaton outgrows their current network infrastructure or when it is time for a re-evaluation, we can easily enhance their solution with higher-scale Juniper equipment," says Serra.

To complete Hallaton's architecture overhaul, Data Networks engineers created virtual servers (VMs) in a new Microsoft Azure tenant, migrated all data from off-premises to a Microsoft SharePoint file structure in Azure, and hardened Hallaton's security with multi-factor authentication (MFA) for user access and prevention of unauthorized access from outside the United States. As a special project for Hallaton's Finance team and its third-party accounting consultants, Data Networks engineers also created a virtual private network (VPN) to the Hallaton Sage accounting

## About Data Networks

Data Networks provides effective technology-based solutions to meet your unique needs. Our solutions are specifically developed to help you drive productivity and manage change.

### INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY

By partnering at the highest levels with the industry's most respected manufacturers, Data Networks can deliver the right products for your environment with the most aggressive pricing possible. Our strong vendor relationships also bring technical training opportunities, expedited help desk resources, and professional service liaisons for consulting and project engagements.

### INSPIRED ENGINEERING

Our goal is to be your trusted technology advisor. So we staff highly-qualified engineers who bring years of experience and the most advanced technical certifications to every engagement. We assign them a single area of technical focus, a unique approach that allows them to continually update their skills and expand their specialized technical knowledge. And we arm them with documented best practices developed over more than 30 years of public-sector service.

We invite you to learn more at [datanetworks.com](http://datanetworks.com) or by calling 800-283-6387.

VM in Azure so that only these users can connect into it securely. Hallaton users have noticed and are pleased with all the enhancements, according to Harman, who specifically cites the wireless network improvement: "Our Wi-Fi network performance historically had spotty coverage. The root cause wasn't our Internet connection because we have fiberoptic into our building from the street. The Wi-Fi here is so much better now inside and outside with the Juniper Networks devices and the support from Data Networks."

From there, the Data Networks Service Desk provided both an email address and a self-service portal to Hallaton users for submission of questions and problems that are automatically converted into tickets. There were a lot of tickets in the beginning, particularly as Hallaton users got accustomed to SharePoint as their file management and collaboration solution. Matt Mueller, a Data Networks Service Desk Engineer, says, "The initial high volume of SharePoint tickets wasn't due to the technology, it was simply a big change for Hallaton users. They had been using individual drives on a physical server off-premise for file storage where no two users can edit the same file at the same time. SharePoint's support for multiple users simultaneously collaborating on the same file was a huge paradigm shift for the Hallaton user community. Our Service Desk trained the users well, triaged all the initial tickets, and detected patterns in many of them which led to a few corrective actions that eliminated the issues over time."

Data Networks Service Desk engineers are experts with Juniper Networks' Mist cloud management portal as a force multiplier in supporting Hallaton. The Juniper firewall, switches, and WAPs installed by Data Networks are all connected with and centrally managed via the Mist portal. For example, Data Networks engineers regularly push firmware updates to the Juniper devices using Mist's intuitive console. In addition, Juniper Mist's built-in artificial intelligence (AI) continuously performs predictive analysis of Hallaton's network traffic and informs the Service Desk in advance of performance issues. Data Networks engineers can then proactively troubleshoot and address these emerging problems before they cause noticeable performance degradation.

To manage and support Hallaton's Microsoft cloud applications, Data Networks has also implemented a business continuity/disaster recovery (BCDR) solution. Datto Remote Monitoring and Management (RMM) communicates with agents installed on endpoints including the Azure VMs to immediately detect errors such as failures within the established nightly backup process. This RMM service, which Data Networks recommends to all its MSP clients, gathers many performance statistics in real-time and instantaneously alerts Service Desk engineers via auto-generated tickets so that problems are identified, worked, and resolved quickly.

## Senior Engineers Deliver Continuous IT Improvements

One of the things that sets Data Networks apart from other MSPs is our deep bench of senior Engineers and Solution Architects. Hallaton continues to rely heavily on Data Networks engineers to address escalations and for design and implementation of strategic improvements to infrastructure and applications which has reduced ticket volume significantly. The partnership between Hallaton and Data Networks continues to strengthen.

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*Harman concludes, "Our Data Networks team gives me peace of mind and allows me to focus on running the business. Any issue or question we communicate; we know that Data Networks is on top of it. Their follow-up is instant and continuous until resolution. Data Networks engineers are true professionals."*