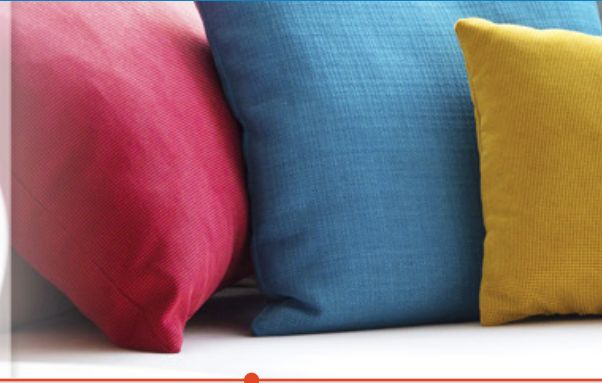


## Anna's Linens Drives IT Efficiency By Transitioning Stores from Traditional Phones to Voice Over IP

EarthLink MPLS Network Provides Reliability, Performance to Support Both Voice and Critical Store Applications



"As a result of a more robust MPLS network from EarthLink Business, we have the security, reliability and bandwidth to run both our voice communications and critical in-store applications to support efficient growth now and as we expand the business."

JOE EVANGO

DIRECTOR, TECHNOLOGY SERVICES, ANNA'S LINENS

**ANNA'S LINENS**  
YOUR HOME • YOUR WAY



### Challenges

With 310 stores nationwide, Anna's Linens needed a voice and data solution that could accommodate a growing number of stores and applications and an increasingly centralized IT model, but had concerns about the reliability of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

### Solution

Anna's Linens moved to an EarthLink MPLS network, integrated voice with SIP Trunking, and implemented failover and disaster recovery, giving the company enhanced voice capabilities while lowering costs and ensuring reliability.

### Results

- By replacing analog phone lines at each store with a centralized VoIP solution, the retailer offset the cost of a significant boost in bandwidth and consolidated the operation of their voice network.
- With MPLS and SIP Trunking, Anna's centralized management of mission-critical services.
- In the event of an outage at its main site, Anna's Linens has failover and disaster recovery at a colocation facility, allowing communications as usual at stores nationwide.
- A blended network with ADSL and T1 gives each store the bandwidth it needs and keeps costs down.
- The private MPLS network provides essential security for critical company data navigating between stores, distribution centers and corporate headquarters.



### Business Challenges

In 1987, Alan Gladstone opened the first Anna's Linens store in California, naming it after his mother. Today, Anna's Linens continues to be family run and operated even as it has expanded to 310 stores in 19 states plus Puerto Rico.

The discount luxury home textiles and décor business is known for high-quality products at affordable prices with high-touch customer service. As Anna's Linens expanded nationwide, the company turned to technology to help manage stores remotely and efficiently, and to keep the stores, offices, distribution centers, and above all its customers, connected.

"Data and voice communications are the bloodline of our business," said Harrison Kang, Vice President of IT, Anna's Linens "We can't operate our stores, offices and distribution centers without them."

Anna's Linens relies on the network to extend services to stores while keeping IT management centralized – a model that keeps complexity and cost down. With a growing nationwide footprint, Anna's Linens was pushing the limits of its network and found it lacked the bandwidth to continue adding applications and stores. Managing phone systems at each store was also a challenge, as it was difficult to troubleshoot and didn't provide for economies of scale or the ability to make agile global changes.

Anna's needed a way to effectively manage voice changes and standardize on a single platform. Integrating voice and data provided an opportunity to justify a network upgrade and simplify management, but the company had concerns about reliability.

### The Solution

In collaboration with EarthLink partner, Grauman Communications, Anna's Linens moved to an EarthLink MPLS network and integrated voice with SIP Trunking. Anna's prioritizes traffic on the network with Class of Service to ensure that the most essential applications – such as voice and point-of-sale traffic – take precedence.



## Why Anna's Linens Selected EarthLink Business

"Anna's Linens had a comfort level and trust in EarthLink as they made the significant move from the analog to the VoIP world," said Joe Grauman of Grauman Communications, an EarthLink partner. "They're realizing tremendous efficiency – increasing bandwidth to run more applications for essentially similar costs."



Previously, analog phone lines terminated at each store. In the consolidated network, SIP trunks terminate at the company's primary data center. With failover to a data center out of state, stores maintain voice communications even in the event of an outage at the main location.

"With EarthLink, we were able to establish solid backup and disaster recovery for our communication services, which was absolutely essential in the transition to Voice over IP," Kang noted.

All stores are aggregated into a single MPLS network, enabling the company's IT team to manage mission-critical services centrally, including voice, customer relationship management (CRM) system, data transactions, people counters, security and even store thermostats. The private MPLS network also provides security for transporting critical company information, in support of PCI compliance requirements.

EarthLink uniquely offered the flexibility to blend several types of access, including ADSL and T1, to give each store the bandwidth it needs while keeping costs down. EarthLink also provided the comprehensive enterprise service level agreements that Anna's required for service availability and repair times.

## Positioned for the Future

The network backbone for Anna's Linens supports its increasingly centralized IT model. All voice traffic from multiple locations taps into a central point – eliminating the need for dedicated voice connections at each business site. By replacing analog phone lines with VoIP from EarthLink, the retailer offset the cost of a significant boost in bandwidth while simplifying management.

The reliability of the voice service and failover capabilities ensure the company can always communicate with customers. Additionally, VoIP will support all-employee conference calls across the more than 300 stores.

"EarthLink gives us greater stability for our voice and data communications to keep us in contact with our customers and keep our many stores connected," shared Kang.

Most importantly, Anna's Linens is well positioned for future business and IT initiatives.

"As a result of a more robust network from EarthLink Business, we have the security, reliability and bandwidth to run both our voice communications and critical in-store applications to support efficient growth now and as we expand the business," added Joe Evango, Director of Technology Services, Anna's Linens. "Moving forward with EarthLink, we have quite a few projects coming up that have the potential for significant additional cost savings."