



“ Acumera provides us with consistent attention to connectivity, security, and visibility of all aspects of retail technology. ”

Patrick Abernathy, Director of IT
Jackson's Food Stores, Inc.



Jacksons Food Stores

Scaling network management and security to support Jacksons' expansion from 90 to 250 locations

Jacksons Food Stores faced a challenge most companies would like to have. They were growing rapidly and needed to scale their operations. In just a few years, Jacksons expanded from 90 to 250 stores.

Jacksons has come a long way since its days in 1975 as a single service station in Caldwell, Idaho. But for this nationally recognized chain of Chevron/Texaco/Shell-branded convenience stores in six western states, growth was stretching their IT department's capabilities. Jacksons needed the support of network security and management partner who could support critical network security and connectivity requirements as they grew.

To address its network management needs, Jacksons Director of IT, Patrick Abernathy turned to Acumera. The Austin-based managed security services provider is trusted by the C-Store industry as a network partner that takes on the complexity of network security and management so their clients can focus on growing their business.

The partnership between Acumera and Jacksons IT department successfully scaled expanding operations. Their long-term relationship serves as a useful model for C-store operators seeking a collaborative approach to managing growth and controlling costs.



Business Needs: Making the Case for Managed Network and Security Services

C-store IT departments regularly weigh the decision to keep all their operations in-house or retain a managed services partner. As Jacksons number of stores increased so did the network complexity and the amount of time Jacksons IT department spent managing new store networks.

The time spent on site visits to troubleshoot store technology issues stretched the IT staff to manage beyond capacity. As new locations came online Abernathy faced these challenges:

- Growing costs and IT support requirements for existing and new sites across an expanding number of sites in six states.
- Added time and labor to manage PCI compliance
- Managing the complex network design and set-up for each location
- The time-intensive procurement and management of Internet providers spanning multiple regions

The strain on his team gave Abernathy two choices, hire more headcount, or turn to a managed services partner. Abernathy was able to make the case to his management team for Acumera's expertise as a long-term cost savings for the company.

“ My people couldn't focus on supporting systems that added value to the business, I was able to avoid additional hires and free up time to manage revenue-generating systems and let Acumera focus on network management, security, and compliance tools. ”

Patrick Abernathy, Director of IT
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The Acumera Solution

Acumera designed a multi-site WAN network architecture so Jacksons could take advantage of low-cost and commercially available Internet access. The platform is also easily installed at new locations to bring new stores online quickly and cost-effectively.

Acumera's cloud-managed platform makes it easy to add new locations through centrally controlled configurations that are securely deployed to a hardened perimeter security device placed at every Jacksons site. With Acumera's powerful, yet simple visibility dashboard, Abernathy gained a centralized view of every location's network including the point-of-sale environment, their business management software, and every Internet-enabled (IoT) device.

“The AcuVigil™ Dashboard gives me visibility into every store that I didn't have before, Abernathy stated. “I can see and control what devices are on the network at any location. I know by looking at the dashboard exactly what the issue is, down to the switch. I've used other network monitoring tools, but they didn't give us a good dashboard with the ability to see what's going on in the store.”



Services

Acumera's services gave Jacksons more than perimeter security solution. The solution provides Jackson's stores end-to-end connectivity, visibility, and security for their POS systems, IoT devices, and business systems to maximize uptime across all of their remote locations.



CONNECTIVITY

WAN Failover

WAN Failover ensures automatic failover from the primary to a secondary Internet connection to keep Jackson's point-of-sale systems and other connected devices up and running in the event of an Internet disruption.

Managed Broadband

Abernathy no longer has to worry about sourcing and procurement, managing the break/fix process, or sorting through the stacks of broadband bills for both his 4G and secondary broadband connections.

Automatic Site-to-Site VPN

Jacksons connects to every location from the AcuVigil Dashboard with AutoVPN, which initiates secure site-to-site VPN tunnels with a simple click

24x7x365 NOC support

Acumera's NOC team proactively monitors all of Jacksons stores and works to resolve issues before they impact the business



VISIBILITY

The AcuVigil™ Dashboard gives Jacksons powerful and secure remote network monitoring in a single view of every site, connection, and connected device. Abernathy's team proactively troubleshoots from HQ - or anywhere - to prevent truck rolls and site visits.

Tanks App

With an app enables that securely delivers automatic tank gauge readings to Abernathy's fuel telematics system, he was able to eliminate one more device on his system.



SECURITY + COMPLIANCE

Secure Remote Access to the POS

Jacksons accesses their point-of-sale systems remotely using a remote access app built to work with their brand of POS. The app ensures PCI-required on-off controls for remote connectivity to the POS and automatically breaks the connection after a period of inactivity while generating logs and audit trails to support their compliance efforts.

PCI Tools

To reduce their PCI-compliance labor, Jacksons deployed Acumera's PCI tools in every location including internal/external network scanning and web filtering to prevent access to content and sites that contain malware.

The Results

- Abernathy's IT team was able to manage Jackson's expansion and save on IT costs and the expense of adding and training new resources.
- IT costs are controlled with a fixed monthly fee, making it easier to forecast IT expenses as Jacksons added new locations.
- Remote monitoring through the AcuVigil Dashboard gave Abernathy's team the ability to monitor and troubleshoot from Jackson's headquarters, reducing truck rolls by 30 percent.
- Cloud management of app-enabled connections simplified new store set up and reduced the number of devices on their network and in their back-office.
- No more network headaches with VPN global reset times decreasing from 20 minutes to 3 minutes, a source of frustration for Abernathy.
- Abernathy stated the Acumera's PCI tools eliminated the time and labor that went into managing their PCI compliance processes.
- Beyond the tangible results, Abernathy values the partnership and collaborative culture that Acumera has maintained during their own business growth. "We can go to Acumera, and they're open to helping resolve the issues we have, says Abernathy. When we have a problem, they jump on it and help or send me to the right person. On the flip side, they call and ask me what I think. It's a two-way street."

