

Case Study

Industry: Telecommunications

Telephone Exchange Carrier Association

Project: Replacement NAC

Major challenge: Network security upgrade/overhaul

Major benefit: Easy operation;
\$50,000 cost savings.



The background

An association of 1000 small-to-medium local telephone companies in rural America helps its members deliver voice, video, and data on high-speed multi-use broadband systems at reasonable prices. The association offers its experience and expertise to assist its members. Part of that expertise involves the association's network specialist, who is responsible for network administration and network security at the association's headquarters and six regional offices. The specialist wanted to replace his aging Cisco NAC, which was at the end of its life.

Search criteria

Having used the Cisco NAC for four years, he was very familiar with how NACs work and knew what he wanted in a replacement NAC. At the top of the list was an agentless NAC. Coming in a very close second was price, a major concern.

"I really only wanted an agentless NAC," he explained. "NACs with an agent are harder to deploy. I also wanted to get away from agents because they slow down everything on the desktop. If I can make things on the desktop go faster, my clients are happier."

The specialist went on to explain that with an agent, clients have to wait for authentication every time they log on.

In doing research, he consulted *SC Magazine*, a leading periodical for IT security professionals. That's where he saw the magazine's evaluation and five-star rating for Veri-NAC™, the Black Box NAC offering. He added Veri-NAC to his evaluation list, which included five NAC systems.

Free demo and evaluation

After reviewing Veri-NAC on-line and having in-depth discussions with a Black Box security specialist about his application, he was ready for Black Box to send a free demo model to test for 30 days.

"Having the demo was great," he said. "It gave me a chance to set it up and play around with blocking assets."

As is standard with Veri-NAC demo evaluations, Black Box security specialists and techs worked with him to go through setup and operation on-line. That included reviewing several webinars on Black Box's Web site and a live, on-line conference.

"Setup was so easy and very straightforward," he said. "I did a webcast with the tech. He could see my screens, and we went through everything on-line. It was very thorough."

During the trial, the specialist put Veri-NAC through the paces, including setting up trusted assets. He also ran Veri-NAC with his existing Cisco NAC and had no problems at all.

Veri-NAC advantages: agentless design, reduced installation time, \$50,000 cost savings.

Agentless design makes life a lot easier.

At the end of the trial period, the network specialist chose the Veri-NAC system for a few primary reasons. The most important was its agentless design.

"Other NACs said they were agentless, but they weren't. Veri-NAC really is agentless." An agentless design makes his job much
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"Veri-NAC is a joy compared to the Cisco NAC. It's also a fraction of the cost."

Network Specialist, Telephone Exchange Carrier Association



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Case Study (Continued)

easier. Not only can he improve desktop performance for his clients, he also reduces his administration/installation time and costs.

The specialist set up and ran Veri-NAC at the headquarters for a month before shipping out units to the six regional offices. He simply had helpers in the remote offices plug in the units and turn them on. He was then able to do all the setup remotely from headquarters. That saved a lot of time and thousands in travel expenses.

"It's really nice having the main unit here. I can run vulnerability tests and audits on the regional units right from the main unit. Veri-NAC is a joy to use compared to what I had. I especially like the e-mail alerts. I'll get e-mails right away when an untrusted asset goes on the network."

"A fraction of the cost."

Much more significant though was the initial \$35,000–\$50,000 cost savings the specialist realized from choosing Veri-NAC, which was "a fraction of the cost" of the Cisco units.

"Absolutely, a good experience."

That's what the specialist response was when asked about his experience in working with Black Box.

"My Black Box contact was great," he said. "He would answer any questions I had. And, if he didn't know the answer, he would get a tech and they would call back together. I absolutely would recommend Veri-NAC and Black Box to other people."

