

Reliable file transfer process with KPI tracking



Location

Cincinnati, Ohio

Industry

CPG/Grocery

Business challenge

Ensure bandwidth management, reliability, checkpoint restart, and visibility

Solution

- Connect:Direct®
- Sterling Control Center™
- Sterling Managed File Transfer™

Benefits

- Ensures reliable data transfer, despite increasing size or volume
- Provides visibility into the entire file transfer process
- Facilitates tracking of key performance indicators
- Enables quick and efficient proactive response to exceptions
- Helps guarantee service level agreements are met

The Kroger Company

Customer background

Founded in 1883, Kroger has become one of the nation's largest retail grocery chains. More than 320,000 associates serve customers in 2,474 supermarkets and multi-department stores in 31 states.

Kroger associates also serve customers in 778 convenience stores, 392 fine jewelry stores, and 723 supermarket fuel centers. In addition, the company operates 41 food processing plants nationwide.

Business challenge

When Kroger experienced internal managed file transfer problems, the company began looking for a solution that would resolve several issues, including bandwidth management, reliability, checkpoint restart, and visibility.

Kroger sends thousands of files each day—from inventory to orders. Therefore, data transfer reliability has always been

important, especially since 90 percent of all data flows among internal applications. Indeed, file transfer outages can cause huge delays in critical data delivery to these applications.

For example, if a multi-gigabyte file, such as an inventory update, required two hours of transfer time and if there was a disruption, the transfer process began all over again, which affected service level agreements. A critical delay like that also cost thousands of dollars per minute and could even stop product flow to stores. However, if Kroger implemented a managed file transfer process that included checkpoint restart, the transfer process would begin where it left off; thereby meeting service level agreements.

Another part of Kroger's managed file transfer problem was lack of visibility. The company needed a system that

“Connect:Direct has become the Kroger standard for internal file transfer. It’s especially important because of its checkpoint restart capabilities, which ultimately help us meet service level agreements.”

Randy Patton
Project Lead, Integration Services,
Kroger Co.

provided visibility into tracking volume, error rates and successful transfers. Visibility would, in turn, allow Kroger to track key performance indicators, such as file delivery failure, repetitive failures and server outages, as well as help them define and enforce better service level agreements.

Solution

Now Sterling Managed File Transfer serves as Kroger’s internal multi-platform batch transfer system. The Connect:Direct solution gives the company the ability to pass multiple size files from different types of operating systems in a reliable and secure manner.

Sterling Control Center, another component of the Sterling Managed File Transfer solution, gives Kroger complete visibility into critical file transfer processes, including success or failure of individual transfers. Sterling Control Center provides Kroger with a centralized monitoring system that alerts them when there’s a problem so they can respond efficiently and effectively. It also gives Kroger the ability to successfully meet service level agreements and track key performance indicators.

Since customers continue to demand higher level service agreements, Sterling Control Center is key because it enables Kroger to proactively monitor the entire

file transfer system, across geographies, platforms and products. It gives them the ability to see issues as they happen and react to them before service level agreements are missed. Sterling Managed File Transfer even enabled the company to reduce and redirect the number of employees who manage the file transfer infrastructure from eight to two.

Key benefits

Reliability

Now Kroger can send any number of files, despite their size, from point to point in a secure, reliable manner. The Sterling Commerce solution successfully manages bandwidth and throughput from server to server and provides checkpoint restart to ensure service level agreements are met.

Visibility

Kroger has a consolidated view of the entire file transfer environment, plus the power to respond quickly and efficiently to exceptions. Centralized monitoring, management and reporting capabilities help them establish a proactive approach to problem resolution and track key performance indicators (KPI).

Efficiency

The Sterling Commerce solution enabled Kroger to reduce and redirect the number of employees who manage the file transfer process system from eight to two, thus enhancing return on investment.

About Sterling Commerce

Sterling Commerce, an AT&T Inc. (NYSE:T) company, helps companies optimize and transform their Business Collaboration Network quickly, easily and securely so they can accelerate revenues, reduce costs and protect their enterprise. Sterling Commerce provides more than 30,000 customers worldwide with applications and integration solutions to connect, communicate and collaborate with their customers, partners and suppliers.

Learn more at www.sterlingcommerce.com.

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