

Dorman, Inc.—WANCare and WANNet



Dorman Products, Inc., is a leading supplier of automotive products and home hardware to the automotive aftermarket and mass merchandise market. The company's headquarters are in Colmar, Pennsylvania, with manufacturing and distribution sites in several U.S. states and Ontario, Canada.

Business Challenge

Recently, Dorman lost network availability at all of its sites during the overnight hours. Dorman's staff assumed there was a problem with their MPLS network, which is provided by a major telecommunications carrier.

The timing couldn't have been worse for Dorman. "Our senior network administrator had recently left the company, and our current network manager was traveling home from another site at the time of the outage," said Heather Hoffman, systems administrator for Dorman Products.

The Appia Solution

Dorman is a customer of Appia's WANCare and WANNet services. These services monitor and manage Dorman's network and network devices, and notify customers in the event of network problems. When the network went down, a technician in Appia's Network Operations Center (NOC) immediately recognized the outage; did some preliminary investigation, and contacted the customer. The technician then called in an Appia engineer to assist.

Because of the urgency of the situation, Hoffman called the telecom provider directly to see if they had any additional information. She was told that Dorman's circuits were reporting up. The technician suggested the problem was with Dorman's T-1 connection, and that Dorman would have to investigate it themselves.

When the network was originally designed, Appia engineers had implemented MPLS service throughout, so they were familiar with the network and how it was configured. The Appia engineer determined that a router on Dorman's network was the cause of the outage. He immediately contacted the telecom provider and described the problem. "I would not have had the ammunition without Appia backing me up," said Hoffman. "Appia told the technician from our telecom provider what the problem was.

"The Appia technician was able to guide the technician from the telecom provider directly to the location of the trouble and describe what was causing the outage. Once the provider recognized the problem, they identified a router at Dorman's Warsaw, Kentucky location that had failed and needed to be reconfigured. Even though it was 3 AM by the time the problem had been isolated, the Appia engineer worked to restore the router. "Appia is a service provider that I know is there for me 24 hours a day, seven days a week," added Hoffman. "When they need to wake somebody up, they wake somebody up."

Once the network was restored, Appia monitored the circuit for 24 hours to make sure there were no further issues.

The Results

Hoffman writes, "I just wanted to say thanks so much for your help over the past few nights with our WAN outages. Without Appia's determination, technical expertise and guidance, I doubt we would have come through it as well.

"Knowing that Appia is monitoring our WAN 24 hours a day is where the value of Appia comes in for us. We have the peace of mind of Appia monitoring our production sites at all hours of the day in case a problem arises.

"On behalf of everyone at Dorman Products, I wanted to let you know how much we value our relationship with Appia. We thank you for your always prompt, professional and courteous service."