

When two brands come together: Geiger Connects with FirstLight for Smooth Data Center Transition and Powerful Connectivity Solutions

OPPORTUNITY

As the largest privately owned and managed promotional product distribution company in the world, Maine-based Geiger needed to transform its Lewiston headquarters into a world-class facility. As a company whose lifeblood depends on placing customer orders quickly and accurately, the reliability of their data, applications and network are critically important.



Geiger has grown significantly since it was founded back in 1878, and while it has become a major promotional products, corporate gifts and apparel company, it is also well known for its Farmers' Almanac publication.

In October of 2016, as part of its \$12 million business expansion project that involved renovating 105,000 square feet of space, Geiger decided to transform and modernize its approach to IT infrastructure by moving to an outsourced data center and private cloud solution for their production and disaster recovery requirements. The move would not only result in leveraging FirstLight's low-latency network, data centers and secure private cloud solutions, but it would also free up space, significantly reduce capital expenses, and bolster security. Geiger also took advantage of redundancy in power, connectivity, and cooling for Geiger's IT infrastructure.

"We had a data center on premises since the mid-1990s, and it cost way too much," said Geiger CIO Dale Denham. "We looked at the issue seriously when we were planning our expansion. We knew we didn't want to build a new data center and pay for annual maintenance on HVAC, power, etc., and we felt our onsite data center space would be better suited for office space. But with promotional product sales — including a fast-growing Internet business — being the backbone of our enterprise, we needed a solution that was impeccably reliable. So we took months to prepare, pared down equipment, and selected a vendor we could trust — FirstLight."

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMPANY: GEIGER

INDUSTRY: RETAIL

LOCATION: LEWISTON, MAINE

CHALLENGE:

- Given its business model, Geiger depends on low-latency Internet connectivity, powerful private cloud-DR solutions, and sound data management to ensure customers are able to place orders efficiently and seamlessly.
- Geiger needed to enhance its disaster recovery plan to a more reliable, economical solution using a powerful, geo-redundant private cloud provider.
- Geiger was looking to increase office space, reduce both CapEx and OpEx, and improve security by eliminating its on-premises data center.
- Geiger sought an experienced, local company that could help transfer Geiger's IT infrastructure to an off-site data center, with added security as well as redundant power, HVAC, and connectivity.
- Geiger was also looking for a true partner that would handle their move as though they were members of the Geiger team.

SOLUTION:

- Geiger chose FirstLight's data centers as the new home for their critical IT infrastructure and production workloads.
- FirstLight's private cloud provided a more robust, secure solution to ensure the availability of Geiger's critical applications and data.
- FirstLight's scalable Internet provided additional bandwidth at a moment's notice.
- FirstLight helped make the transition seamless for Geiger and its customers, acting as a trusted member of Geiger's extended tactical team.

RESULTS:

- Geiger has saved money, staff time, and space by moving its data center off-premises to FirstLight's Brunswick Data Center.
- Geiger now benefits from a more robust, secure DR strategy.
- Geiger can rely on the resources and expertise of the FirstLight team to help with future needs, including quickly increasing or reducing storage capacity, compute resources, and bandwidth.
- Geiger has peace of mind knowing that its IT provider is a trusted partner seeking a long-term relationship.

SOLUTION

Geiger was impressed with the company's private 14,000-route-mile fiber network and its powerful cloud offerings. It also admired FirstLight's record of strong customer service and its Northeast roots. Furthermore, they had developed a strong working relationship, as FirstLight was also a long-standing customer of Geiger, the supplier of choice for FirstLight's promotional products and logoware.

After due diligence and careful analysis, Geiger selected FirstLight's Brunswick data center for its new off-premises site: a secure, geo-redundant high-availability environment perfectly suited for Geiger's heavy volume of on-line retail orders.

RESULTS

Countless hours of planning on the part of Geiger's IT staff and FirstLight paid off, as the migration went as planned over the weekend.

"When we needed faster connectivity, FirstLight promptly upgraded our backup Internet connection. It was because of their support that we were 'open for business' on Monday morning with phones and connectivity ready to roll. They were flexible and accommodating every step of the way."

"We have a diverse infrastructure that FirstLight is now supporting with more than 500 remote workers mostly working from home but also from various remote offices around the world," adds Denham. "All our phones are now hosted through FirstLight."

Denham also noted that Geiger's monthly power bill was significantly reduced, and he now enjoys some other intangible benefits including added reliability, reduced maintenance and staff time, and peace of mind. Geiger also upgraded its disaster recovery plan, which Denham said would have been almost impossible to achieve without FirstLight if they continued to operate their own data center.

Geiger has since enhanced its unified communications platform, adding FirstLight SIP trunks to ensure reliable communications and video conferencing between members of their growing team – an important feature for a workforce that often works remotely. Since opening a new office in the UK, collaboration is more important than ever.

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"Our team had its hands full with this important project, and good to their promise, FirstLight was there for us," said Geiger CEO Gene Geiger. "We weren't just looking for an IT vendor – we were really looking for a partner that would grow with us, and one we could count on. What's more, we favor local companies as much as possible, and we like that FirstLight offered local support, with a local team and data center nearby. That helped seal the deal."

"We remain very happy with FirstLight's service and support," adds Denham. "Critical issues have been handled well. As important as infrastructure is to our success, it is not something I like to spend time thinking about. I want to focus on how to drive profitable revenue growth and having FirstLight as our infrastructure partner (along with a great team of IT engineers) allows me to do just that."

ABOUT FIRSTLIGHT

FirstLight provides a full complement of cost effective, high quality, scalable telecommunications services, including high speed Internet access, data center, monitoring, cloud, managed and voice services to retail and wholesale customers throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

For more information call 1-800-461-4863 or visit www.FirstLight.net