

# CASE STUDY

## IN BRIEF

### The Customer:

Havertys Furniture Companies, Inc. is the nation's fourth largest independent furniture retailer, with operations in 129 locations throughout the southeastern United States.

### The Challenge:

Until recently, Havertys' network was leased line-based. As a result of rapid growth, poor network performance was causing severe response-time delays. A switch to APPN over Frame Relay failed to bring expected improvements. The company needed higher levels of speed, reliability and scalability.

### The Solution:

Havertys chose the Perle 494E Network Controller, which offers TCP/IP over Frame Relay connection for SNA devices. This functionality met the need for speed and reliability and made it possible to standardize on a single networking protocol across all platforms within the company's heterogeneous network.

### The Benefits:

Using TCP/IP, the Perle 494E allowed Havertys to integrate both LAN-based and AS/400 traffic plus Internet and intranet strategies into one IP-based network. In addition to scalability and memory savings, the Perle 494E Network Controllers facilitated network expansion, while reducing total cost of ownership.

### Editors Note:

The Perle 494E Remote Controller was recently replaced by the Perle 594e Network Controller. The Perle 594e comes with all the award winning workstation controller functionality of the 494E, including IP host connect for SNA devices. In addition, it offers IP Routing and NC Proxy Boot Server functionality.

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## Single Protocol Access Eases Growth Pains

### Major Furniture Retailer Chooses Perle 494E Over IBM 5494

### THE CUSTOMER:

With sales of over half a billion dollars, Havertys Furniture Companies, Inc. ranks as the nation's fourth largest independent furniture retailer. Operating out of 129 locations throughout 14 southeastern states, Havertys' business is supported by 3 data centers. Each one uses AS/400s to maintain furniture inventory and track all retail shipments, deliverables and receivables.

### THE CHALLENGE:

#### *Every Second Counts*

Havertys' original network was based on leased lines and had become overburdened by rapid growth. Poor network performance, with an average response time of 8 seconds, was undermining customer service levels. A switch to Frame Relay had failed to provide adequate levels of reliability and scalability. "We are a customer service oriented business," explains Keith Wyatt, Manager of Communications and Technical Support. "We could not afford to have delays on our systems for three seconds, let alone eight or ten. If the system response time was poor, Havertys would deal with lost orders, products going (unknowingly) into back order, and very frustrated sales and delivery staff that were unable to conduct their jobs properly. We needed a more reliable solution." At 3 to 4 seconds, APPN response time was still too slow for staff who were trying to close sales and ensure effective and efficient customer service.

### THE SOLUTION:

#### *Turning to TCP/IP*

Wyatt started to shop for a better solution. "We looked at Data Link Switching (DLSw) routers but this would not help reduce the overall response time," explains Wyatt. "After talking with my Perle representative, I began to realize that Perle 494E Controllers integrating TCP/IP were the answer to my problems."

#### *AS/400 & LAN Integration*

By deploying Perle's 494E with TCP/IP support, Havertys was able to integrate LAN and AS/400 traffic as well as Internet and intranet strategies into one IP-based infrastructure. The network scaled effectively to support Havertys' 129 locations and network reliability improved greatly, minimizing data loss.

#### *Improved Performance*

Most importantly, average response time was reduced from three seconds to one second, which significantly improved Havertys' ability to deliver effective customer service. "The two second improvement in response time makes a huge difference in the eyes of our customers. There was a point where we actually lost sales because of the delay and that does not occur anymore," explained Wyatt.

#### *A Solution That Beats DLSw Routers*

Wyatt has also noticed cost savings: "The nice part about using the TCP/IP functionality of the Perle 494E controllers is that we are paying less for routers, as we no longer need the expensive DLSw enabled code and all the extra memory of high-end routers."

#### *Memory Savings*

The introduction of Perle Controllers with TCP/IP into 80 sites has freed up a significant amount of memory in the host, which will enable Wyatt to continue to convert the final 50 sites to TCP/IP. "With TCP/IP we can roll the LAN out to other sites and our users can exchange Word documents, spreadsheets, and other information efficiently, something that we could not do with APPN. Now people can begin to access information that they could not access previously, making their jobs easier and more efficient."

#### *AnyNet Is Not A Bottleneck*

"One final point," noted Wyatt. "There is a misconception in the industry that AnyNet will add a measurable taxation on the system's performance. I saw no measurable change in CPU utilization before or after we added our first 80 Perle Controllers and I don't think I'm anywhere near the threshold. The only noticeable change has been the incredible improvement on the performance of the system."

#### *Future Developments*

Havertys Furniture looks forward to introducing the new Perle 594e Network Controller. Wyatt has a need for the flexibility that the Perle 594e's integrated routing capabilities provide, enabling a future migration path for deployment of IP clients alongside SNA clients at remote sites.