



Success Story: NTSG Simplifying the Complex

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– Deborah McCarthy
Vice President, Finance & Business Development
NTSG

Executives at optical networking consulting firm NTSG realized that streamlining its information management processes could help improve customer satisfaction and operational efficiency. After implementing IntraLinks® On-Demand Workspaces™ for secure project communications, the firm realized a 20 to 30 percent improvement in efficiency. Building on the results, the firm began developing a corporate repository to improve internal operations.

Some of the biggest names in the telecommunications and cable industries hire NTSG to help deploy optical networking solutions for their *Fortune 500* clients. The New Jersey-based consulting firm has built its impressive client base with a laser focus on customer satisfaction and operational excellence. In 2007, NTSG executives realized that streamlining its information management processes could help the firm realize gains in both areas.

Storing and sharing information across a complex network of field engineers and corporate internal staff, partners and customers is key to the success of NTSG’s engagements, many of which span multiple years. Geographically dispersed teams must sort through numerous engineering drawings, network designs, project management schedules and testing data to find the information they need every day.

The company used many of the standard communication tools, such as email, FTP sites and internal servers, but decided it wanted to look for a breakthrough means of managing communications and document access that better matched their overall focus on customer satisfaction and operational efficiencies. The older solutions had inherent inefficiencies, such as difficulties transmitting large files and managing document change control.

“NTSG understands the value of providing secure rapid access to documents essential to the effective execution of complex projects over diverse company and geographical domains,” says Deborah McCarthy, NTSG’s vice president of finance and business development. “Moving to the IntraLinks platform significantly reduced the time it took to find a document and increased the certainty that we were all working off the same version.”

A Simple Solution

Looking to make internal and external communications more efficient and secure, NTSG turned to IntraLinks On-Demand Workspaces. The company first focused on customer engagement improvements. The results became apparent almost immediately.

“I was amazed at how IntraLinks increases efficiencies and reduces risk and uncertainty,” says McCarthy. “I wish I knew about it years ago.”

NTSG embedded IntraLinks as its standard communication foundation. From beginning to end of a project, all relevant documents are housed in IntraLinks, making version control obvious and guaranteeing easy access to authorized parties.

Now NTSG quickly creates a new workspace when a project launches. Customers post their design packages, which the NTSG experts use as the basis for drawings, engineering designs and


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The workspace is virtual. The trust is real.™


NTSG

deployment plans. The field teams regularly access this information for the specific methods and procedures they need to use while testing the unique installation variables prior to deployment.

The field teams post network test results and associated documentation "real time" to the workspace. Project managers and systems engineers can quickly retrieve this information to develop final design packages and check results, which are then packaged for the customer to access via IntraLinks.

"Where FTP sites and email provided little inherent organization, IntraLinks offers a structured repository that's easy to use," comments McCarthy. "Customers and NTSG staff know exactly where to find the right version of the right document when they need it."

Saving Time and Money

The organized repository simplifies the entire document management process. While each workspace contains thousands of pages of documents, they are organized so individuals can view only those files that are relevant to them. Instead of suffering from information overload and searching through multiple directories and folders, users have speedy access to the documents they need. Users also can automatically notify individuals and teams when posting new documents or versions.

"Our project information is complex, but using it doesn't have to be," says McCarthy. "Instead of everyone drinking from one big fire hose, everybody has their own drinking fountain. As a result, they can focus on completing their work."

McCarthy estimates switching to IntraLinks saves document processing and access time by 20 to 30 percent. And in her business, that time equates to a lot of money.

"Engineers and other professionals are more productive and that helps us manage our margins because we realize a significant

reduction in costs. Most importantly, we are better able to meet our customers' expectations and provide a document exchange method that enhances the professionalism of our interactions with them," explains McCarthy.

Security = Trust

Given the nature of its work, NTSG has access to the network diagrams of financial institutions and large communications service providers. NTSG holds the keys to their customers' kingdoms, and they rely on the firm to protect this most sensitive of data. Therefore, security of the information is a priority for NTSG.

Customers trust NTSG, and NTSG trusts IntraLinks to protect proprietary information. Built-in security lets users set individual access levels for each document, including who can view, edit or download information. Audit trails track who accessed what information and when.

"IntraLinks allows us to let only the right people, both in our company and outside, see the documents they absolutely need and have permission to see," says McCarthy. "It's like the Fort Knox of the information age, with an elegant compliance architecture that eliminates any of the risk and uncertainty of the wrong person accessing a file."

The IntraLinks Difference

When designing their workspace, NTSG worked closely with the IntraLinks customer service team from the beginning. IntraLinks staff met with NTSG to understand the firm's business and processes. Armed with this knowledge, IntraLinks helped create a workspace architecture tailored to NTSG's operations.

"IntraLinks understands where you're going to have to go in the future, and where they need to take you," says McCarthy. "It's their differential advantage, and they use it to deliver a very clean, concise and structured way to store and manage your documents and files."

Improving Corporate Operations

After improving its project communications, NTSG set its sights on streamlining internal operations. Using IntraLinks as a repository for corporate documents will increase efficiency across a variety of functions, including sales, marketing, finance and human resources.

"Once you see IntraLinks used in one place, the light bulbs start going on," says McCarthy. "It's benefits translates to many other areas of the company."

Along with improving information flow, the repository also captures institutional knowledge. Documents get posted to IntraLinks rather than hidden in PCs and filing cabinets throughout the company. The repository ensures NTSG can meet document retention requirements for customers, employees and regulators.

Additionally, anytime, anywhere access for those with permission from the office or field has increased NTSG team collaboration. Staff can comment on documents using a common thread, and share their knowledge with other team members.

"We never envisioned it was going to be this easy to have a secure, common repository," McCarthy says. "We now have a comprehensive approach to our document control."

About NTSG

NTSG, Inc. is an Optical Networking Professional Services company that provides engineering, installation, test and turn-up services for the service provider, cable and enterprise markets. NTSG has been successfully managing optical networking deployments of Cisco, Ciena and Nortel equipment for over eight years for major service providers, cable operators, OEMs and enterprise customers. NTSG's reputation is built on the quality and reliability of its engineering and field deployment professionals, all of whom have extensive experience and certifications in the networking industry. They base the high customer satisfaction ratings of their project deliveries on providing the highest level of expertise and professionalism.

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