

Southern Star saves 60% and eliminates downtime

Cisco & Barracuda vs. Meraki: WAN Costs at Southern Star

Total cost of ownership at HQ before Meraki		Total cost of ownership at HQ with Meraki	
Cisco 5510 ASA with VPN license	7,900	Meraki MX70	1,995
Cisco 2811 ISR	1,698	3 Years Advanced Security License (w/VPN)	4,000
Cisco DSU/CSU (WAN interface card)	698	Traffic Shaping and Content Filtering	included
Cisco ISR RAM upgrade and flash memory	2,868	Support and Maintenance	included
Barracuda appliance	1,400		
Barracuda Energize Updates for 3 years	1,437		
Cisco & Barracuda Total Cost (USD)	\$16,001	Meraki Total Cost (USD)	\$5,995

The story behind the savings

- ▶ Affordable WAN solution with centralized management facilitates network expansion to 15 remote locations
- ▶ Content filtering decreases virus infections, easing workload for two IT admins supporting 500 employees
- ▶ Meraki dashboard offers single-pane view of Southern Star’s wired and wireless networks

“We had antivirus software installed, but our employees still seemed to find a way to get viruses on their computers,” explained Nathan Sterling wryly. “They’d mail them to us at headquarters to fix, and they’d have four days of downtime and lost productivity.”

Sterling is the Network Administrator at Southern Star, Inc., a regional service provider for Dish Network satellite systems. With 15 offices across 5 states, Southern Star’s employees receive, deliver, and install Dish Network equipment 365 days a year.

“The MX router provides the content filtering, site-to-site VPN, and all firewall and routing functionality that we could possibly need, for an extremely good value. What a phenomenal product!”

– Nathan Sterling, Network Administrator, Southern Star

Southern Star has grown rapidly, from 20 employees five years ago to over 500 employees now. Southern Star’s original Cisco ISR router at headquarters couldn’t handle the expansion, so they bought a Cisco ASA with firewall protection and VPN and placed it in front of the ISR. Still, Sterling said, Cisco was too expensive and too complex of a solution to deploy in Southern Star’s branches.

“Each individual office did its own thing,” he said. “We had no VPN, no Active Directory Internet, and no control. When there was a problem, I would travel to the remote office and fix it. More downtime.”

Sterling really wanted to be able to manage the networks at the remote offices. “We looked at many products, from Cisco to Barracuda, and when we found the Meraki MX, we felt it was made for us,” he said.

“We love that we can manage all of our locations, including our corporate headquarters, from a web browser -- a simple GUI that allows us to easily implement a change across the board, and the change is instantly pushed to that location,” Sterling said. “Meanwhile, the Meraki content filtering allows our employees to get to what they need, while reducing the hours we spend fixing virus problems.”

