



Customer engagement leader CSG gains flexibility and security with AT&T NetBond[®] for Cloud

- **Business needs** - CSG needed a highly reliable, highly secure way to deliver applications, data, and controls to help its customers engage with consumers, control spending, and get to market quickly.
- **Networking solution** - AT&T NetBond[®] for Cloud provides a highly secure, flexible, private connection that helps increase business agility with scalable, on-demand services.
- **Business value** - Enhanced efficiency, improved performance, reduced risk of cyber threats
- **Industry focus** - Customer engagement
- **Size** - 4,000 employees in 25 countries

About CSG

CSG delivers innovative software and services that help its global clients acquire, monetize, engage, and retain customers. For more than 35 years, CSG has simplified the complexity of business, providing tools and solutions for revenue management, digital monetization, payments, and customer engagement that help its clients thrive.

The situation

CSG relies on technology to fuel its customers' success. With an eye toward enhanced performance and cybersecurity, CSG leaders were looking for a new, highly secure way to deliver the applications, data, and controls to their customers—and that aligned with the governance, regulatory, and risk-reduction requirements.

Solution

AT&T NetBond® for Cloud is a networking solution that gives CSG a highly secure, private connection to the cloud. The scalable, on-demand solution delivers the performance and security of a private network with the flexibility and efficiency of cloud computing.



Simplifying business complexity

CSG has become a trusted partner to some of the world's best-known brands. The company provides solutions and services that help businesses monetize and digitally enable the customer experience. Its capabilities extend to billions of automated customer interactions per year.

Hundreds of leading global brands choose CSG to help them engage customers and reduce operating expenses in the ever-changing global marketplace. The organization has simplified the complexity of business, delivering innovative customer engagement solutions in more than 120 countries worldwide.

The company's thought leadership and leading-edge technologies are garnering attention and accolades. Global market research and analysis firm Frost & Sullivan recently honored CSG with the 2020 Global New Product Innovation Award in recognition of its comprehensive product portfolio, strong focus on new product innovation, and flexible deployment capabilities.

Technologies to move the company forward

CSG's sophisticated infrastructure and knowledgeable technologists are vital elements of the company's success. Its award-winning suite of software and services allows its customers across dozens of industries to tackle their biggest business challenges and thrive in an ever-changing marketplace.

The education and experience of the company's IT team enable the organization's ongoing innovation. Chief Information Security Officer Joseph Wilson is a computer security expert whose career includes 5 years as the chief of a major Department of Defense Network Operations and Defense Center. He also served in the private sector as the Security Architect, Strategist, and Manager of Security Operations for a Fortune 250 food company prior to joining CSG.

His colleague John DiMartino, CSG's Director of Global Information Security, was a Network Defense Analyst for the U.S. Air Force and a Special Agent for the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, where he led cybersecurity investigations into high-technology crimes. He also worked in the private sector for a Big 5 consulting firm.

They and the rest of the CSG IT team help protect the vital information of its clients and their customers. CSG

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John DiMartino
Director of Global Information Security, CSG

processes vast numbers of credit card payments for its clients, including about 70% of the U.S. cable market. “The governance, risk, and compliance challenges are pretty immense,” Wilson acknowledged. “We have to make sure that we’re adhering to laws, that we’re up to standards, and that we’re setting the bar for the rest of the organization.”

The team also works to ensure network security and performance. “We drive next-gen technologies that can put us in a winning position,” Wilson said. “We look for solutions that are flexible, agnostic where possible, and easy to scale.”

The challenge of the cloud

To succeed in the marketplace, companies are searching for the best way to capitalize on new technologies. DiMartino says one of CSG’s biggest challenges is scaling the ever-increasing scope of information security. “Our customers are becoming more intelligent and they’re asking for more,” he said. “My challenge is finding a way for our team to continue to scale and handle the scope of all that change in a world of constrained resources.”

Wilson said this challenge has led many organizations to consider cloud computing, which can decrease IT costs and increase scalability and efficiency. However, making the move to the cloud takes thoughtful planning. “The push to the cloud has been one of the biggest challenges for us and all companies,” he said.

“The fact that the moat-and-castle technique of having a data center and putting all your security around it starts to diminish really quickly and the value prop doesn’t exist as easily or as readily. We know we have to shift to the cloud, but part of the difficulty is that there’s not an all-for-one technology replacement,” he said.

“Security organizations are trying to flex and understand how to deliver in a secure fashion the applications, data, and all of the controls that are required from a governance and risk perspective in an easily monitored fashion,” Wilson said. “And that’s a real challenge.”





Increased demands for security

Additionally, moving multiple data centers to the cloud adds a layer of complexity to networks. “It’s a huge challenge to be able to deploy your applications anywhere,” Wilson said. “This requires deploying security controls closer to the application.”

A move to the cloud can be further complicated by ever-changing privacy laws and other regulations, customers’ increasing demands for security, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Having employees work from home has forced organizations to find new ways to secure their environments.

“When we started looking heavily at the public cloud, we knew we had to have the ability to flex, and one of the key components for us was understanding who could actually play well in a multi-cloud environment,” Wilson said. “AT&T definitely can.”

A strategic investment in the cloud

AT&T NetBond for Cloud is a networking solution that provides a highly secure, private connection, helping companies like CSG increase business agility. NetBond offers scalable, on-demand services with

the performance and security of a private network and the flexibility and efficiency of cloud computing.

The solution enhances efficiency and performance while streamlining connections among different clouds. It also reduces the risk of Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks and other cyber threats that can occur with private internet connections.

The solution precluded the need for CSG to make large investments in complex hardware or additional data centers. “We were after something that gave us the ability to enter into a multi-cloud environment and grow and shrink our footprint in on-demand fashion,” Wilson said. “That’s why we chose AT&T NetBond for Cloud.”

Wilson and DiMartino evaluated numerous options before selecting the AT&T solution. “AT&T NetBond for Cloud was our first and primary choice from the onset due to the flexibility,” DiMartino said, stressing that the deployment was not a migration. “We did not have an existing capability, and we made the operational decision to strategically invest in the cloud. The network team evaluated multiple technologies and came back and said, ‘This is a no-brainer. I don’t know why we wouldn’t go in this direction.’”

Wilson said he fully supported the team's recommendation. "From our perspective, it's been a rock-solid experience. It wasn't a transition, but it was an enabling factor for us to move in very quick fashion to the cloud."

The sky's the limit

DiMartino said the company's goal was to find a solution that it could deploy and change "at the speed of the cloud." Since CSG introduced AT&T NetBond for Cloud, the solution has more than proved its worth. "In a short time, we have moved literally hundreds of accounts," he said. This would not have been possible with any traditional connectivity model using circuits or VPNs.

"It all goes back to scalability," DiMartino said. "Any solution other than AT&T NetBond just doesn't scale." Trying to connect through other methods requires DDoS hardware, edge security, and a method of keeping accounts separate. "Multiply that by the number of accounts you have and the scale breaks down very quickly."

DiMartino continued, "AT&T NetBond for Cloud was really a standout product, one of the few we looked at that would even begin to answer that technical challenge of how a network team can scale and accelerate to the speed of public cloud." AT&T NetBond for Cloud enables CSG teams to continue to build in creative and innovative ways and allows the network team to keep up without being buried.

DiMartino considers NetBond vastly superior to traditional circuit models. Physical connectivity requires a great deal of time and coordination among multiple teams. "NetBond has really reduced the amount of time it takes to stand up a new connection. It's even simpler

than standing up a new VPN connectivity to a new endpoint and it's very easy for our team to manage."

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Elegant and easy to use

Wilson said ongoing management is a simple matter thanks to the NetBond self-service portal. "That was one of the key things that sold the technology-focused individuals on our team," he said. "It's super flexible. With a few logical changes here and there and we've got a new dynamic environment. I've heard direct feedback from our engineering staff on multiple occasions that the portal is just elegant and super easy to use."

Wilson added: "That's ultimately what led us toward AT&T NetBond for Cloud, and we've been so impressed. Frankly, we're going to continue to migrate certain applications to the cloud. AT&T NetBond for Cloud allows us to deliver it that way." Wilson also said that he's quick to recommend NetBond to colleagues.

CSG continues to benefit from the decision to connect to the cloud with AT&T NetBond for Cloud. "Think about a team that's trying to deliver 24/7 operations for employees in 25 countries," Wilson said. "Delivering cloud-related services from a network perspective and from a security perspective with low-to-no maintenance overhead is a big deal to the team."