



Helping clients keep the network working

- **Business needs** - Swift resolution of clients' network problems.
- **Networking solution** - Immediate, dedicated support and rapid response keep outages to a minimum.
- **Business value** - Helping customers solve network problems fast.
- **Industry focus** - Telecommunication management and consulting; support for the hospitality and utility industries.
- **Size** - 120 employees

About The Eric Ryan Corporation

The Eric Ryan Corporation (ERC) is a full service, B2B utility and telecommunications management and consulting firm. It has helped saved significant revenue for their clients in hospitality, manufacturing, healthcare, retail, education, government, media, and entertainment.

The situation

Reliable connectivity is vital to customer satisfaction, especially in the hospitality industry. Many ERC clients, however, do not have full time IT / telecommunications support at each property. ERC wanted to give its clients the tools to manage their internet and telephone connections to promote maximum guest satisfaction.

Solution

Enhanced Transport Service (ETS) from AT&T Business offers proactive alarm monitoring to keep outages to a minimum. It also supports prompt support and responsive solutions to manage any network interruptions. The service gives ERC and its clients a vital resource. The company can manage their networks and deliver the reliable telecommunications services their guests expect. The Enhanced Transport Service Customer Maintenance Center provides a single point of contact staffed by trained communications technicians or network engineers providing support around the clock 365 days per year.

Saving millions for its customers

Keith Venezia founded The Eric Ryan Corporation (ERC) in 1990 to help companies save on their utility and telecommunications bills. The corporation, named for Venezia's sons, works to recover dollars overspent on utility and telecommunications services.

Venezia is the CEO of the company he started in a small Western Pennsylvania town managing the utility and telecommunications support for a steel mill. After the steel mill shut down, Venezia decided to offer the service on a shared savings contingency model. He would only earn money if he saved his customers money. He would get a percentage of the money saved. This provided customers a no-risk-no-cost test drive of his services. From there, the business took off.

ERC has become one of the nation's largest full-service utility and telecommunications consulting firms. It has been guiding and saving money for some of the nation's top organizations for more than three decades. The

company recently discovered more than \$1 million in telecommunications savings for a state court system in the South. "Our staff is programmed to find any dollar amount that they can to help our customers' bottom line," Venezia said.

Venezia believes the company's small-town roots contribute significantly to its success. "We're in a small, blue-collar town that lends itself to having very low overhead," he said. "That makes us extremely competitive."

Even as ERC's success has spawned competition, the company regularly wins more than 80% of the requests for proposal (RFPs) on which it bids. "It's not because we're cheap and cut corners," Venezia said. "It's because we're very thorough."

"I've been very impressed because AT&T is so big, and we're quite small compared to some of the other organizations AT&T Business deals with. But so far, we feel like we're the top dog."

Keith Venezia
CEO, The Eric Ryan Corporation

Leading the industry

As the company grew, it expanded its service portfolio from auditing customers' utility bills to helping them purchase telecom and energy services. Customers were grateful and came to view ERC as a one-stop shop. The company began fielding customer requests

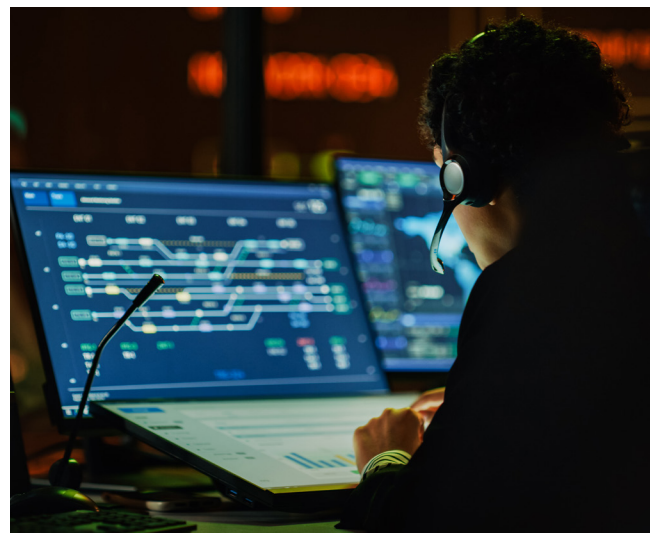
for everything from finding engineers to perform site surveys to solving middle-of-the-night communications problems. “We provide those value-adds that have made us a leader in this industry,” Venezie said.

Some of the most pressing customer calls involve telecommunications challenges. Many ERC clients, especially those in the hospitality industry, rely heavily on network services. Connectivity is vital for hotel operations, including reservations, check-ins, human resources, and dozens of other processes. Rebecca Hink, ERC Chief Operating Officer, said hotels must adhere to corporate standards when it comes to communications services. “The brands dictate what the hotels do these days,” Hink said. “So, we try to help our clients get to where they need to be.”

In addition, hotel guests expect reliable internet and phone services. Kim Sheen, ERC Senior Network Specialist, remembers a frantic call from a manager at an extended stay hotel that had lost connectivity. “People live there,” she said. “For all intents and purposes, that’s their home. And now they had no internet and no way to get online. They were panicked. Downtime is a big deal in the hotel world, extended stay or not. If guests can’t get online, they’re going to go somewhere else.”

A better way to manage challenges

When a problem arises for one of ERC’s customers, it can be complicated because many customers lack a full-time IT staff. And because property managers in the hospitality industry tend to change jobs often, the manager on duty may not know where to turn if the network goes down. ERC began fielding requests from its hotel customers to provide round-the-clock help desk services.



“It’s the people at AT&T that make the difference.”

Kim Sheen

Senior Network Specialist, The Eric Ryan Corporation

ERC staff were more than willing to help but sometimes found it difficult to connect with the right person to assist them. Some telecommunications providers require callers to navigate intricate interactive voice response systems to access support. “And even then, you might not get to the right person,” Sheen said. “So, you get transferred again. That can be frustrating, for sure.” It’s the reason that many clients use the ERC helpdesk service and in return why ERC uses Enhanced Transport Service (ETS) from AT&T Business for their properties. It ensures they get the best possible support in the industry.

A single point of contact

The Eric Ryan Corporation simplified its help desk operations with Enhanced Transport Service, which delivers comprehensive network support and helps streamline operations. The service makes it easy for

ERC to get help with any issue. One phone call to the help center provides the technical resources ERC clients need to manage an outage or other problems.

Sheen said her clients and colleagues appreciate not having to navigate complicated interactive voice response systems. Thanks to ETS, they can now connect quickly with a specialist who can help. The ETS technicians from AT&T Business possess hundreds of years of combined experience and a deep understanding network architecture. They can quickly diagnose and resolve problems. “We get great response time and people willing to help,” Sheen said. “That’s been my experience.”

Having a single point of contact has made a real difference for ERC. “On a scale from one to 10, it’s a 25,” Sheen said. AT&T Business has even been willing to help with unrelated customer problems. Sheen elaborated: “We had an issue where we had to find a router model that didn’t technically belong to AT&T Business, but the person I happened to call went above and beyond. They found the router model we needed to do the disconnect. It’s the people at AT&T that make the difference. I recommend AT&T Business all the time.”

Building relationships

AT&T Business augments the people on its team with the Enhanced Transport Service Automated Testing feature. In many cases the proactive monitoring initiates testing of a failed circuit even before an outage report has been submitted, significantly cutting downtime.

ETS also saves time and makes life easier for ERC and

its clients by updating them regularly throughout any difficulty. Hink said customers appreciate the quick response they receive when a problem arises.

“Building relationships with AT&T Business has been huge. Their support team is phenomenal.”

Rebecca Hink
Chief Operating Officer, The Eric Ryan Corporation

It’s easy for ERC to submit a trouble ticket, and Hink and her colleagues appreciate having account reps that are willing to monitor the situation and follow up if necessary. “The automation and the emails you get are incredibly helpful,” she said. “But AT&T Business takes it a step further, so we’re not just dealing with a computer.”

The relationship benefits ERC clients. “Knowing the people on the AT&T Business team is the real plus,” she said. “When we call them, they always go above and beyond. And because of that, the Eric Ryan Corporation can give our customers the expertise to quickly assess and solve issues.”

Enhanced effectiveness

Venezie mentioned the backing ERC receives from its account team at AT&T Business. “The assistance and responsiveness have been huge,” he said. “I’ve been very impressed because AT&T is so big, and we’re quite small compared to some of the other organizations AT&T Business deals with. But so far, we feel like we’re the top dog.”