

# PECO II Makes its Worldwide Mobile Workforce Even More Mobile with Affordable VPN Connectivity

**Challenge:** Provide a large, diverse, highly mobile workforce with remote access to corporate resources while reining in costs from a previous, difficult-to-manage VPN system

**Solution:** Implementation of iPass® Corporate Access™ service and Cisco VPN security solutions

**Results:** Increased user satisfaction and reduction in average monthly VPN service costs from \$15,780 to \$3,874. Total costs have decreased by more than 75 percent

PECO II, Inc., the largest independent, full-service provider of telecommunications power systems, was originally founded in 1934 as the Power Equipment Company (PECO) in Detroit, Michigan. Headquartered in Galion, Ohio, PECO II also provides engineering, onsite installation services and designs to communications service providers in the local exchange, long-distance, wireless, broadband and Internet markets worldwide. PECO II has an impressive growth record, expanding from \$18 million in revenues and 162 employees in 1996 to more than \$156 million in revenues and 1,230 employees within only four years.

## The Need to Support a Mobile Workforce Cost-Effectively

To enable provide its growing and highly mobile workforce with access to corporate resources, PECO II had established Frame Relay connections to remote offices and a managed VPN service for mobile field workers. The company's large and diverse workforce of telecom installers used a dial-up, managed VPN service to submit time sheets, expense reports and project management statistics. PECO II's staff also checked email and used file and print access through the VPN. However, they found the managed VPN service difficult to use and manage-swamping the company's help desk and increasing costs that continued to spiral out of control.

According to Andrew J. Daniels, Director of Network Operations at PECO II, "The bills with our old system were astronomical. The Internet service provider didn't have enough access numbers. People would use a toll-free dialup number and just stay connected while the bills climbed. We couldn't get detailed usage reporting so we couldn't bill costs back to departments or make people more responsible about their usage." In addition, he notes, "I was looking for something that relieved pressure from our help desk and resolved our cost issues."

“ Andrew J. Daniels, Director of Network Operations says he was particularly pleased with the deep menu from iPass that let us pick the features we wanted. For even more flexibility, iPass set up customized services, software clients and training. Installation of the iPass service was very easy to do, as was the VPN. We set it up, set a few parameters and were off and running. ”

## Partners iPass and Cisco Answer the Call

Daniels found the solution he needed at the iPass booth while attending Cisco Networkers, an annual event for Cisco customers where partners like iPass showcase solutions, share information on testing and certification as well as demonstrate Cisco solutions and equipment. A long-time Cisco product user, Daniels says the PECO II network is "Cisco edge-to-edge" and notes that a Cisco solution was "my primary choice." So he was pleased to find that iPass, a Cisco AVVID partner, offered a solution with the flexibility he needed, the

costs he wanted and global reach-all based on a Cisco VPN solution.

As the leading software-enabled virtual network operator, iPass provides remote and mobile workers quick, reliable and secure connections to corporate networks and the Internet in approximately 150 countries-including numerous iPass-enabled wired and wireless broadband hotspots around the globe. Once deployed, the iPass service gives the corporate IT department policy-based control over how users access network resources.

PECO II uses redundant Cisco VPN 3005 Concentrators configured for failover. This has eliminated many of the VPN failures the company experienced with its old managed VPN service-and put an end to early-morning calls Daniels often received asking him to reboot the gateway. In addition, iPass provides an auto-teardown feature so users are always securely connected.

### **Results: Reduced Costs, Greater Flexibility and Happier Users**

Over the seven months the new system has been in operation, PECO II has reduced its average monthly costs from \$15,780 to \$3,874. Total costs for the period have decreased by more than 75 percent. Summing up the results of the company's new solution, Daniels says, "We reduced overhead, reduced technical support and gained flexibility. With iPass, my users are happy."

Part of the increased user satisfaction comes from a single sign-on, or 1-click solution, so PECO II employees must only remember and enter one username and password for iPass, the VPN and the Windows® NT domain. Daniels was also pleased that iPass gave them the option not to allow users to save their password. He claims this feature forces users to remember their own passwords and reduces calls to the company's help desk asking for them.

In addition, iPass provides PECO II with consistent overseas connections that the former provider was unable to deliver, saving money by decreasing the need for toll-free dial-up usage.

To further cut costs, the iPassConnect™ service interface provides timeout policies that prevent connections from being left open indefinitely, ensuring access billing only for the time people are actually connected. More local access numbers, better management features and improved reporting enable PECO II to control its costs internally as well.

For even more cost savings, PECO II is in the process of eliminating Frame Relay connections to remote offices. Daniels says, "We activated the free Cisco VPN 3002 Hardware Client that comes with the Cisco VPN 3005 Concentrator. With the increased availability of DSL and other broadband connections, we were able to add VPN tunnels even to small home offices, without using Frame Relay. This gave us better encryption and more security, and cut costs over Frame Relay connections to these offices."

PECO II also plans to roll out wireless services to more users with the thousands of Wi-Fi hotspots in the growing iPass Global Broadband Roaming network. Daniels says, "We're a mobile workforce, and the more mobile I can make them, the better."

### **About iPass**

iPass Inc. ([www.ipass.com](http://www.ipass.com)) provides software-enabled enterprise connectivity services that give employees secure access to information and applications on the corporate network from any location in the world. The iPass global virtual network offers employees a range of Internet protocol-based connectivity technologies, including wired and wireless broadband service at airports, hotels and conference centers worldwide.

*Headquarters*  
iPass Inc.  
3800 Bridge Parkway  
Redwood Shores, CA 94065 United States  
Tel: +1 650.232.4100 Fax: +1 650.232.4111  
[www.ipass.com](http://www.ipass.com)

