Despite widespread downsizing in the manufacturing industry, the automation and control solutions engineered by Polaris Automation and its sister company, Industrial Solutions, Inc. (ISI), drove such rapid growth that the companies outgrew their shared office space. The servers remained at Polaris while ISI engineers moved to a nearby location connected by an Ethernet point-to-point connection.

According to Polaris President Scott Cooke, the previous wireless “line of sight” network that had seemed such an economical choice soon began to cost them latency, downtime and communication gaps. He recalls that data-sharing ate up so much Internet bandwidth that “our IP phones were rendered useless.”

Getting new capacity to grow new business
Cooke needed a better connection to facilitate collaboration between 50 employees across two locations and his clients’ locations. “We support manufacturing facilities all over the world,” he explains. “To do that, we have to have the bandwidth to set up a dedicated VPN connection to any customer at any given time.”

Polaris and ISI often control a customer’s business systems remotely or stream video from closed-circuit TVs to see what’s happening as they do remote troubleshooting. This creates high bandwidth needs and Cooke wanted a network that could measure up.

Fiber met his requirements for capacity, scalability and control and so, in 2011, Cooke chose TWCBC to implement a 10 Mbps Ethernet…
Private Line (EPL) circuit to create reliable and low latency connectivity between Polaris and ISI locations. A 10 Mbps Dedicated Internet Access (DIA) provides symmetrical, high-bandwidth upload and download connectivity.

Geographically dispersed locations now operate “under one roof”

“We realized how much money we were losing [with the previous provider],” Cooke says. “It would be three to five times longer to execute a task than it did if you were local to the server. If you had four or five people running that application, it was just exponential.”

With TWCBC’s fiber-based Ethernet point-to-point circuit, Cooke says latencies are not an issue: “If I’m at the ISI location, it acts just as it does if I’m at the Polaris location. [The TWCBC solution has] brought the business together as if we’re under one roof again.”

Scaling bandwidth to meet evolving homeland security requirements

Security is another worry the TWCBC network addresses. Cooke points out that routine encryption and other safeguards eat up bandwidth. But because his companies actually take remote control of manufacturing operations and business systems, the security—and bandwidth—demands are even higher.

Cooke points out how extra layers of authentication, encryption and other safeguards must be put in place to ensure the security of manufacturing applications. He notes, for example, how vital it is to keep terrorists or malicious hackers from being able to manipulate operations at a facility that produces pharmaceuticals or explosive chemicals. Cooke adds that as risks increase, having the bandwidth needed to implement the encryption and other security requirements “directly affects our ability to support our customers.”

TWCBC has been a strong ally for Polaris and ISI. Cooke appreciates how TWCBC engineers truly understand what he’s up against and are proactive in helping him stay in front of emerging security challenges and business opportunities.

“Our company has seen good growth,” Cooke says. He adds that the scalability of TWCBC’s fiber solution means that “if we need more bandwidth to do something, we can just make a call. So, in terms of opportunities for [continued] growth, there are really no boundaries!”

About Time Warner Cable Business Services

Time Warner Cable Business Services, a division of Time Warner Cable, offers a full complement of business communications tools to small, medium and enterprise-sized companies under its Time Warner Cable Business Class brand. Its Internet, voice, television, network and cloud services are enhanced by award-winning customer service and local support teams. Through its NaviSite subsidiary, Time Warner Cable Business Services also offers scalable managed services, including application services, enterprise hosting, and managed cloud services primarily in the U.S. and U.K. Time Warner Cable Business Services, founded in 1998, serves approximately 625,000 business customers throughout Time Warner Cable’s service areas. For more information, visit http://business.twc.com.