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Sam Larson
Vice President
Enterprise and Technology Solutions



Administaff Relies on Myriad F5 Products for High Availability and Load Balancing for Critical Applications



Industry:

Professional employer organization

Challenges:

- Reliable and secure payroll and HR application
- Reliable incoming and outgoing links
- Wide area network control and failover

Solution:

BIG-IP Local Traffic Manager
BIG-IP Global Traffic Manager
BIG-IP Link Controller

Benefits:

- Reliable and secure payroll and HR applications
- ISP high availability
- Improved network and application performance gains
- WAN application traffic management

Overview

Administaff, Inc. (NYSE: ASF) is the nation's leading professional employer organization (PEO), serving as a full-service human resources (HR) department for small and medium-sized businesses throughout the United States. Operating 41 sales offices in 22 major markets, Administaff provides comprehensive HR strategies to companies with 10 to 2,000 employees for increased productivity and growth.

Recognizing the need to provide high performance and availability for critical business applications accessed by internal and external users, Administaff deploys F5's BIG-IP application delivery networking solution (both in the local and wide-area network), along with the BIG-IP Link Controller.

Using these combined F5 solutions, Administaff is able to:

- Provide application load-balancing to ensure high availability and exceptional performance for critical internal applications used to process payroll and HR information for its small business clients
- Provide an efficient disaster recovery mechanism for its HR Web portal to ensure availability in the event of a

disaster at its primary data center

- Provide redundant inbound and outbound Internet connectivity to help ensure that critical business activities are not interrupted
- Provide for real-time availability for public Web sites such as www.administaff.com
- Recognize, handle and manage SSL without putting any undue strain on the company's servers

Challenge

Administaff needed its propriety payroll and HR application to be highly available and load-balanced in order for its HR professionals throughout the country to perform critical tasks, such as payroll processing and employment administration, with predictable and high performance levels. In addition, the company needed to provide an efficient mechanism for failover in the event of a disaster for its externally accessed secure Web portal. Finally, Administaff wanted to ensure that its inbound and outbound links to the Internet were highly available, ensuring clients could access the applications they needed in the event that one link failed.



In 2001, Administaff began research to determine how to best meet these needs. After looking at several potential solutions, the company selected the F5 products as the most comprehensive solution.

Solution

Administaff currently relies on three F5 products:

- BIG-IP Local Traffic Manager
- BIG-IP Global Traffic Manager (formerly 3-DNS)
- BIG-IP Link Controller

The **BIG IP Local Traffic Manager**

is instrumental in providing exceptional performance for the company's proprietary payroll-processing application, load-balancing the activity among several application and database servers. Users experience noticeable network performance gains through this product. It also increases server capacity by offloading SSL traffic, something Administaff relies upon heavily for its external users.

Tied in to the BIG-IP Local Traffic Manager is the **BIG-IP Global Traffic Manager**, which provides WAN application traffic management and supports a disaster recovery site located in another city for the majority of Administaff's critical business applications.

Administaff also relies on the **BIG-IP Link Controller** for high ISP availability, ensuring traffic is directed over the best possible link. BIG-IP Link Controller aggregates cost-effective ISP links to help manage costs while delivering a seamless user experience.

Advanced product technology is vital, but if the service behind those products isn't top-notch, the technology doesn't matter – a fact that isn't lost on Administaff.

"Any time I've needed to know something, or needed something resolved, someone (at F5) has always been available to help me," notes Wes Graves, supervisor, systems architecture. "From a

customer-service standpoint, I'm totally satisfied with what they've provided us."

Administaff has realized exceptional business value through the F5 products deployed in its environment, says Sam Larson, vice president, enterprise and technology solutions.

"The F5 products are a key component of the high availability and performance characteristics of our most critical business applications," Larson notes. "As a PEO, providing timely payroll and HR information and services is essential to our success as a business."

F5 Networks, Inc.
Corporate Headquarters
 401 Elliott Avenue West
 Seattle, WA 98119
 (206) 272-5555 Voice
 (888) 88BIGIP Toll-Free
 (206) 272-5556 Fax
www.f5.com
info@f5.com

F5 Networks
Asia-Pacific
 +65-6533-6103 Voice
 +65-6533-6103 Fax
info.asia@f5.com

F5 Networks, Ltd
Europe/Middle-East/Africa
 +44 (0)1932 582 000 Voice
 +44 (0)1932 582 001 Fax
emeainfo@f5.com

F5 Networks
Japan K.K.
 +81-3-5114-3200 Voice
 +81-3-5114-3201 Fax
info@f5networks.co.jp