

# Enhancing security with the power of IoT

- **Business needs** – A way to ensure constant connectivity for customers' networks, especially in areas with unreliable internet coverage.
- **Networking solution** – The global AT&T Internet of Things (IoT) network helps make client networks highly secure and available to handle customer transactions and other mission-critical processes.
- **Business value** – Consistent connectivity, simplified operations, enhanced customer loyalty
- **Industry focus** – Managed network security services provider
- **Size** – Thousands of clients

## About Acumera

Acumera is a managed network security provider. It gives enterprise businesses and multi-site retailers strong network security, high-speed connectivity, and unmatched visibility to support their payment systems, business intelligence operations, management, and bottom lines. Acumera's comprehensive solution fully secures store networks and point of sale (POS) systems while also providing compliant, highly secure, 24/7 remote access, proactive support, and a full suite of edge computing security, monitoring, analytics, and compliance tools to meet stringent payment card, food safety, and other industry standards.

## The situation

Many Acumera clients operate in areas without access to reliable internet services. The company needed a way to deliver consistent connectivity to its growing numbers of clients that rely on Acumera for network security, compliance, and support.

## Solution

AT&T Business provides Acumera with a sophisticated Internet of Things solution, AT&T Global SIM, that delivers reliable connectivity, even in remote locations. The solution supports Acumera customers' ability to operate network, security, payment processing, and other mission-critical functions.

## A leader in managed security for multi-site businesses and retailers

Based in Austin, Texas, Acumera was founded in 2002 by Dirk Heinen and Brett Stewart. Heinen and Stewart are known as the pioneers of broadband internet access for business travelers. They launched Wayport (now AT&T Wi-Fi Services), which became the leading supplier of Ethernet connections for hotel rooms and the leading supplier of hotspot wireless access. After that, Heinen and Stewart wanted to deliver the benefits of secure, reliable connectivity to all retailers.

They knew that many convenience stores internally managed their own network security and payment systems. This was true, even when the stores were part of large multi-site operations, according to Roberto Chang, Acumera Executive Vice President of Operations.

"Brett and Dirk saw networks that were diverse, open, and unprotected," Chang said. "Most people who buy at convenience stores use their credit cards. These transactions can be vulnerable to hackers."

In addition, network management was difficult for larger customers. Many had to deal with multiple security and compliance issues and different internet service providers for each site.

"Many systems are critical to client success, so we manage WAN failover using AT&T cellular service to provide connectivity during primary internet outages."

**Roberto Chang**

Executive Vice President of Operations,  
Acumera

The Acumera founders set out to create a solution that would add security and compliance while connecting the stores' point of sales systems, gas tank gauges, and other IoT devices to give clients better visibility and control of their operations.

## Prioritized network issues

Acumera came up with a way to simplify network connectivity and security management for each customer. "The idea was for multi-site operators to be able to see all the information of every site on a single screen," Chang said. The result is Acumera's AcuVigil™ dashboard, which helps busy managers prioritize network issues.

The slick control panel helps clients manage their entire network with a single pane of glass. The idea has become popular with Acumera's clients. Every year, they want to be able to use AcuVigil to have visibility into new systems or devices they have added to their networks. "Today, we have more than 70,000 edge computing workloads that clients use and view with AcuVigil," Chang said.

The company has become a leader in managed security, network visibility, and automation services for multi-site businesses. Today, service stations, convenience stores, unmanned operations like parking garages, restaurants, retail stores, and many other businesses trust Acumera to secure their networks and simplify operations so they can focus on growing their businesses.

Acumera provides a wide variety of network security services, including network logging, log analysis, intrusion detection, internal and external vulnerability scanning, web filtering, sys-logging, and endpoint detection and response. It also offers compliance tools, broadband, and WAN failover services to support Payment Card Industry (PCI) and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point food industry (HACCP) standards.

## A trusted network provider

Acumera is the only managed network security provider that utilizes ephemeral support connectivity, as required by the Payment Card Industry Security Standards Council, Chang noted.

The company orchestrates more than 70,000 containerized edge computing workloads at thousands of clients' sites. It differentiates itself from other providers with its security and compliance expertise. Acumera secures and segments networks and protects POS systems to safeguard sensitive data and simplify PCI compliance.

It has become a trusted network partner for thousands of its customers. "One of the things that makes Acumera stand out is its best-in-class, U.S.-based network operations center (NOC), which provides 24/7/365 proactive support," Chang said.

Acumera's solution enables visibility of all network-connected devices so the NOC can quickly identify issues and maintain a healthy network. Acumera connects and secures critical payment and store systems and provides a cloud-based dashboard for monitoring and management.

## Connectivity to support vital processes

Acumera wants to ensure that its clients are always able to use its solutions. This requires a network that runs consistently to prevent downtime.

This hasn't always been easy. Why? Many businesses that could benefit from Acumera's innovation lack access to dependable internet service. "We needed to have a source for reliable cellular connectivity to use for wide area network (WAN) failover purposes, or as a backup when the main internet connection was down," Chang said.

AT&T Business suggested an IoT solution using the AT&T Global SIM. This solution delivers dependable cellular connectivity to Acumera clients near and far. "AT&T helped us with a reliable IoT cellular service with quality coverage, even in areas not covered by other cellular carriers," Chang said.

The service is critical because of the vital processes that Acumera delivers to clients. This includes segmentation, management, visibility, and monitoring of client networks. The networks support a wide variety of devices, including servers, computers, and IP cameras, as well as refrigeration, payment, and fuel telematics monitors.

Acumera also supports business intelligence and analytics systems, physical access monitoring, serial devices, digital signage, and more. “Many systems are critical to client success,” Chang said. “So, we manage WAN failover using AT&T cellular service to provide connectivity during primary internet outages.”

## Outstanding reliability, peace of mind

Some clients were unaware of the many threats launched daily against their networks. “They usually think that they’re doing okay because they don’t know what they don’t know,” Chang said.

AcuVigil shows them all the attempts to breach their network security. “It opens their eyes when they can see what’s going on there,” he said. “It saves them a lot of time and helps them sleep at night, knowing that we are always there, monitoring everything.”

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Using services from AT&T Business has helped Acumera provide the outstanding reliability that its clients expect, which in turn has increased loyalty. “We call them stickier customers,” Chang said. “The more services we provide that are reliable, like the AT&T connectivity, the more the customer will stick with us because they know they can rely on us. Having a reliable provider helps us have better relationships with our customers,” Chang said.

“As a customer, we feel that way about AT&T,” Chang added. “Support from AT&T Business has always been timely, straightforward, and friendly. They are always looking for ways to help our business grow. That strengthens our loyalty.”

## Meeting the ever-growing demand

Acumera continues to expand at a record pace. They grew more than 30% per year, even during the pandemic. The company’s services platform and offerings are increasing to meet the need as Acumera reaches into additional markets, solving issues that are unique to those markets.

“We have worked with many companies to provide a solution that allowed them to exit their own hardware business, develop a new customer solution, and come to market faster than they originally planned,” Chang said.

“Additional services from AT&T Business are always under consideration, as the demand for constant connectivity is ever-growing,” he said. “As we expand into new markets, we need to be able to support varying types of businesses with reliable connectivity. AT&T can continue helping us provide these clients with exceptional service.”