



Waynes Pest Control rapidly adapts to growth and the changing workplace with AT&T Business

- **Business needs** - Strengthened business continuity, improved efficiency to support fast-growing enterprise.
- **Networking solution** - Network, mobility, and fleet tracking solutions position the company for continued expansion and operational agility.
- **Business value** - Enhanced customer service, augmented business continuity
- **Industry focus** - Pest control, lawn care, and disease mitigation
- **Size** - 300+ employees operating eight offices in three states

About Waynes Pest Control

Waynes is a residential and commercial business serving customers in Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi. Since its founding in Birmingham in 1973, the organization has expanded to eight offices and more than 300 team members. Over the years, Waynes has added other valuable services for customers, including lawn care and disease control. In 2019 Waynes was acquired by Swedish pest control company Anticimex.

The situation

Even before COVID-19 forced many people to work from home, Waynes developed an initiative that freed technicians from reporting to the office every day. To support this program and rapid company growth, they needed a flexible network. The network had to support large numbers of remote workers and easily integrate new locations. The need became more critical as the coronavirus began spreading in Asia and Europe.

Solution

Waynes chose AT&T Business Fiber, AT&T Dedicated Internet, and wireless phones, which give them the robust network agility to expand and support a remote workforce. Waynes also chose AT&T Fleet Management to strengthen its field operations. The solutions enhanced business continuity, enabling Waynes to continue serving its customers.



“Every day that you don’t have clear visibility into a business once you’ve acquired it, you’re potentially losing money.”

Brian Ethridge
Vice President of Information Technology,
Waynes Pest Control

“Every little thing matters. A lot.”

Nearly 50 years ago Waynes Pest Control set out to build the best termite and pest control service in the industry. Since then, they’ve provided outstanding service for thousands of customers in Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi.

The company’s philosophy is simple: “Every little thing matters. A lot.” This creed was set in place by former President and CEO Steven Splawn, and it has driven steady organic growth. In 2019, Swedish pest control company Anticimex acquired Waynes and continued to expand the business.

For many years, Waynes has offered disease vector management services, helping corporations and homeowners control diseases spread by mosquitoes and rodents. Waynes reacted quickly when COVID-19 appeared, applying its knowledge of sanitation techniques to help mitigate the spread of infection.

Brian Ethridge, Vice President of Information Technology at Waynes, said the relationship with Anticimex was helpful in fighting COVID. “Our offices in Europe had a lot of experience with disinfection and sanitation services,” he said. “They were heavily engaged with these services when COVID-19 first started last year. We were able to use those sister companies to be able to provide us with best practices.”

Enhanced business continuity

Ethridge became the top IT professional at Waynes in an unusual way. He was running the company’s lawn care division when he recognized a need to upgrade the infrastructure. “We were growing at a fast clip and having some growing pains,” he said. “If you’re not using



the technology that's out there, you're not going to be competitive in the marketplace.”

Splawn asked him to study the network architecture and make recommendations. “My initial charge was to find a systems administrator to run the network and infrastructure side of the business and a business analyst to be able to pull the information from our systems to help managers make decisions quickly,” he said.

As he studied potential solutions Ethridge developed such impressive expertise that Splawn asked him to become the IT director and business analyst. He spent months looking at gaps and determining what Waynes needed. “It became pretty evident that there were pieces of our technology that were missing,” Ethridge said.

He also noted a need for upgrading business continuity planning. “We literally had almost all of our infrastructure sitting on premise at our corporate office,” Ethridge said. “We put together a two-to-three-year plan to migrate all servers and phone systems from on-premise to cloud-based systems.”

Support for remote workers

At the same time, Waynes wanted to make life easier for employees and increase company productivity. They created the “Work Smart – Drive Smart” initiative to improve technicians’ quality of life, lower vehicle emissions, and streamline efficiency. The program enabled technicians to begin and end their workdays at home, reporting to the office just once a week to restock their vehicles with the products their jobs require.

To optimize the program benefits and facilitate crew scheduling for emergency response, Waynes needed a way to track technicians’ travel. Also, as they discovered in their planning for business continuity and disaster recovery, they needed a more robust network. Their current networks would struggle to support the technicians and other staff working from home.

“We had to have systems in place for them to be able to communicate and pass day-to-day work back and forth effortlessly, as if they were in the office every day,” Ethridge said. “And we also had to make sure

that the business was protected.” So, he developed a plan to evolve their network to a flexible, cloud-based infrastructure that could give employees working remotely access to all the resources they needed to serve customers.



An upgrade to the cloud

Waynes was already using an AT&T Virtual Private Network and phone infrastructure. So, they decided to stick with AT&T Business. They upgraded their network with an AT&T fiber backbone. “Now, since everything is cloud-based, every office is pointed straight to the cloud,” Ethridge said. Waynes also chose AT&T Dedicated Internet to provide consistent guaranteed bandwidth and performance.

“I give AT&T Business credit,” Ethridge said. “They had a lot of the foresight in building our business continuity plan and understanding what we needed to have in place.”

The account team from AT&T Business also helped with the company’s growth strategy. “Beyond business continuity and disaster recovery, they helped us decide what we need to do to be ready to take on multiple offices.”

Waynes updated its disaster recovery plan in December of 2019, adding a component that would aid their pandemic response. “We made the choice in January 2020 to replace the terminal server running our contact center solution and move everyone to laptops,” Ethridge said. The moves positioned the company perfectly to continue its operations when COVID-19 struck the U.S. a few months later.

Business as usual

By the time the novel coronavirus began spreading in the U.S., Waynes had migrated all its applications and data to the cloud. This allowed its contact center agents to work from home. “In one weekend we were able to move a 50-member contact center team from one room in the office to working in their own homes,” Ethridge said. “Call it providence, but we would have been behind the eight ball if we had not done that. It was part of our business continuity plan, so we were prepared.”

The new network also enabled Waynes to connect with Anticimex corporate headquarters in Stockholm, Sweden. “We had to speed up the process of moving to Dedicated Internet circuits in every office.”



Growth and flexibility

While many others in the pest control industry were unprepared, planning by Waynes enabled the company to thrive during the pandemic. “We had an incredible year from a financial standpoint,” Ethridge said. “That speaks volumes when you consider the complexity of COVID and the fact that we were running the business from people’s homes.”

The growth was part of an impressive trend for Waynes. In only a few years, they’ve tripled the size of the business. They plan to continue that growth curve through organic sales and acquisitions.

Thanks to its updated networks, the company has also been able to offer its employees new benefits. “We were able to put together a new offering to our contact center team that allowed them to choose long-term whether they wanted to work from home five days a week, work three days home and two in the office, or work fulltime in the office,” Ethridge said.

Employees appreciate the flexibility, especially since many of their children are still at home attending school virtually. “I think it went a long way to show our team that we care,” Ethridge added. “Our mantra around here is, ‘You Matter.’ We have billboards with that message, because we want to make sure that our employees and our customers know that they matter to us.”

Increased efficiency and responsiveness

Waynes uses its AT&T Fleet Management solution for visibility into its technicians’ efficiency. “Miles driven to dollars produced or miles driven to hours worked became critical when we moved to Work Smart – Drive Smart,” Ethridge said. “We’re not trying to be Big Brother, but we want to make sure that employees have established target efficiencies.”

The solution enables managers to know where team members are during the workday. “If they’re trying to dispatch somebody to handle a specific problem,



they can see all their team members at one time and know the closest person to deal with the situation,” he said.

“I give AT&T Business credit. They had a lot of the foresight in building our business continuity plan and understanding what we needed to have in place.”

Brian Ethridge
Vice President of Information Technology,
Waynes Pest Control

Knowledge and resources

Ethridge expects Waynes to continue its aggressive growth. As a new business is acquired, he works with the former owner to understand its technology and create a plan for network transition and integration. His goal? Assimilate within 90 days.

“Every day that you don’t have clear visibility into a business once you’ve acquired it, you’re potentially losing money,” Ethridge said. “In 2021 we’re focusing on how to do that and getting really good at migrating those systems.”

The relationship with AT&T Business makes this job easier, according to Ethridge. “We know we have a dependable network,” he said. “And we know that we can get their fleet set up on AT&T Fleet Management.

Because we have worked with AT&T for so long, I know that there’s dependability there. We can reach out and get things handled pretty quickly.”

Ethridge expects AT&T Business to continue to be an important resource for the company. “I use this philosophy with my two teenage boys and with the business,” he said. “It’s my job as their dad and my job in this company to protect those who can’t see something coming around a blind corner that could hurt them or cause pain. My account team at AT&T Business fills that role for me. I may not have the foresight to be able to see around a corner yet, but the deep resources of AT&T Business allow me to grow from an understanding and a technical skill level in a way that I could not do by myself. The knowledge and resources that our account team brings to bear have helped us tremendously.”

