

# Steel plate manufacturer forges customer satisfaction with responsive on-demand network



- **Business Needs** - Faster transport for computer-assisted design files and other large engineering documents
- **Networking Solution** - On-demand network lets Ranger Steel add and reduce bandwidth as needed to support its staff and customers
- **Business Value** - Responsive network enhances customer satisfaction, generates savings
- **Industry Focus** - Steel manufacturing
- **Size** - The largest independently owned on-time steel plate distributor in the U.S.

## About Ranger Steel

Since 1958 Ranger Steel has provided exceptional quality steel plate with dependable on-time delivery at the best price possible, supported by excellent customer service. This winning combination has made it the largest independent steel plate distributor in North America.

## Situation

Serving a wide variety of industries is a point of pride for Ranger Steel. However, maintaining a large inventory and communicating effectively with its customers places heavy demands on the company's network. At certain points in their work cycle Ranger Steel employees send and receive a significant number of computer assisted design (CAD) files, technical specs, photos and other large engineering documents, which often loaded slowly and caused network bottlenecks that frustrated employees. Adding network capacity to meet occasional demands for bandwidth would be expensive; Ranger Steel needed a cost-effective way to increase throughput as needed for bandwidth-intensive applications.

## Solution

AT&T Network on Demand enables Ranger Steel to respond quickly to changing work conditions. This breakthrough platform lets the company easily add or change services on its own, in near-real time, redefining how it manages its network. With Network on Demand, Ranger Steel simply uses a self-service portal to add capacity or scale it back.

## Building lasting relationships with customers

Ranger Steel is an American success story. For nearly six decades the company has made a name for itself with the quality of its products and its commitment to maintaining strong relationships with its customers. The family-owned business supplies steel plates for a wide range of industries, including ship building, oil and gas, mining, light and heavy commercial and industrial construction, and service centers. It also manufactures fabricators for heavy plate, vessel and heat exchangers, storage tanks, bridges, electrical transmission, and railcars.

Headquartered in Houston, Ranger Steel operates distribution centers in Houston, Ft. Worth, Tulsa, St. Louis and Bloomington, California, the better to provide fast, on-demand delivery of its large and diverse product line. Customers depend on Ranger Steel to deliver its specialized inventory, said Roger Whitley, the company's owner and Chief Executive Officer. "Ranger delivers what our customers need, when and where they want it," he says.

The company has always focused on building relationships that last. Whitley believes customer

service is a key element of the company's success. "Our company values include delivering high-quality steel plates to our customers, on-time and at competitive prices," he said. "It's how we've been able to build long-lasting business relationships with our customers."

Whitley and other staff take pride in the company's growth. "We've been in business for 58 years," he said. "It's a family company; I'm second generation." Focusing on what it does best has fueled steady growth for the organization. "We sell one product, and that's steel plates," Whitley says. "We're one of the largest steel plate distributors in North America."

## A heavy demand on the company network

The quality and diversity of Ranger Steel's vast inventory make the company one of the nation's most trusted steel plate suppliers. Ranger produces steel plates in a variety of grades and sizes to meet every customer's needs.



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**Courtney Lyons**

Chief Financial Officer, Ranger Steel

Maintaining a large inventory and providing it on-time has contributed to customers’ reliance on Ranger Steel, but has also placed heavy demands on its network. As part of its daily business, Ranger Steel employees send and receive very large CAD files and other large engineering documents. Courtney Lyons, Ranger Steel Chief Financial Officer, said the process created a significant business challenge. “We had large files that were slowly loading,” she said. “We were having difficulty transmitting and receiving high-resolution pictures.”

The network latency made work difficult for Ranger Steel staff and the company’s customers. The company clearly needed more bandwidth, but only at certain times. When a team of engineers or designers worked onsite at one of the company’s locations, for instance, they were hampered by slow upload and download speeds. But because the need wasn’t constant, Ranger Steel hesitated to invest in its network capacity. The company needed a simple way to increase bandwidth when demand was high and scale it back when it was no longer needed.

## Accessing bandwidth on demand as business needs change

AT&T Network on Demand lets Ranger Steel add or change services on its own, in near-real time, by way of an user-friendly self-service portal. The company can easily increase bandwidth whenever the need arises. “We rely very heavily on the newest technology,” Whitley said.

Network on Demand’s cloud-based architecture puts Ranger Steel in control of its network, simplifying operations, Ms. Lyons said, and making it easy to receive and transmit large files. “We selected the AT&T Network on Demand platform because we were interested in being able to toggle up and down our bandwidth for different locations,” she said. “We needed the ability to change the bandwidth at each location on a daily basis.”

The company is taking advantage of the first software-defined network solution of its kind in the United States, streamlining its network and accelerating innovation. Thanks to Network on Demand, it’s easy for Ranger Steel to supply ample bandwidth whenever the need arises. “When a team comes in for an extra week we have the ability to scale it up,” Ms. Lyons said. “Once they leave, we scale it back down.”

The cost-conscious CFO appreciates that bandwidth use is pro-rated, so Ranger only pays for the what it uses. “Previously that was almost impossible to do,” Ms. Lyons said. “It would take weeks if not months to accomplish. Now we can accomplish the same task in a couple of hours.”

## “Easier, quicker and faster”

Network on Demand is an excellent investment for companies like Ranger Steel that are committed to providing outstanding customer service. The technology lets the company control its network design with the click of a button; as quickly as business needs change, the network will respond and adapt.

The platform improves Ranger Steel’s agility, giving it another advantage in a competitive market. On-demand capabilities have dramatically changed the way it does business and manages its systems and networks. Thanks to Network on Demand, Ranger Steel has simplified its network operations and created a foundation on which it can create flexible services that can grow as company needs change.

“The Network on Demand platform has been very easy to use,” Ms. Lyons said. In addition, AT&T customer service has been responsive. “Since the

very first day they proposed the solution to me, they have been available every single time that I have picked the phone up with a problem or a question,” she said.

Ranger Steel’s owner and CEO has also noticed a positive difference in company operations. “It’s made what we do here easier, quicker and faster,” Whitley said. “Thank you, AT&T.”

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