

Foundation Risk Partners takes on massive expansion with network modernization

A fast-growing business achieves economies of scale with Managed Network Edge

In just six years, insurance brokerage and consulting firm Foundation Risk Partners (FRP) has acquired 174 insurance agencies and related businesses in 182 locations across the United States. FRP's vigorous growth strategy centers around the smooth integration of a large variety of unique and successful insurance agencies.

To overcome alignment challenges and optimize value in bringing together these agencies, the brokerage and consulting firm needed a technology partner able to manage complexity by introducing the right infrastructure and solutions. They found that partner in Spectrum Business.

Spectrum Business presented critical connectivity and network solutions to improve efficiency and synergy across the organization. This in turn allows Foundation Risk Partners to better reap the benefits of their massive and continuing growth.

"Our objective is to be a powerhouse in our field that can service all aspects of the customer value chain for insurance," says Rich Dinan, Chief Information Officer, Foundation Risk Partners.

This began with implementing Spectrum Business fiber circuits for high-speed internet connectivity at each of the company's locations

as they were acquired. With every new installation, trust grew. As FRP expanded, so did the need for better IT standardization and security. Spectrum Business delivered on those needs by introducing [Managed Network Edge](#).

Another critical need for Foundation Risk Partners is having reliable, modern communications at each location. A system was needed to better accommodate a mobile workforce, without the stress of grappling with a complicated user interface. Spectrum Business again delivered, with [Unified Communications with RingCentral](#).

Connectivity that binds

Growth has been key to the Foundation Risk Partners business model since its inception. It has been doubling in size about every 18 months, a trend FRP leaders aim to continue long into the future.

Previously acquired businesses vary in size from a single insurance agent to businesses employing over a hundred people, but each serves a purpose in the larger picture. Most of these agencies and consultancies work in general insurance categories like property and casualty, personal lines and employee benefits. Others have been created to offer specialty products.



With 182 locations across the United States, Foundation Risk Partners (FRP) needed an infrastructure to align insurance businesses of disparate size and functions. Spectrum Business gave them tools to help do just that.

Client profile



Company

Foundation Risk Partners (FRP)

Industry

Professional Services

Services

Managed Network Edge
Unified Communications with RingCentral
Dedicated Fiber Internet (DFI)

Overview

- Foundation Risk Partners (FRP) partnered with Spectrum Business to improve and expand its network infrastructure. Their goal: a network to better manage its ambitious growth strategy. This began with high-speed connectivity, critical to unite and empower their expanding network of subsidiary insurance businesses.
- The brokerage has essentially doubled in size roughly every 18 months over the last six years. Achieving economies of scale via standardization, while allowing acquired businesses to stay on their individual paths of success, is at the core of their winning strategy.

Outcomes

- FRP has acquired 174 businesses in six years, all of which now operate on reliable, high-speed Dedicated Fiber Internet (DFI) connectivity.
- Ensuring online security, operational synergy and regulatory compliance across its diverse lines of business are vital to FRP's success. Comprehensive oversight is achieved using Managed Network Edge.
- To give its agents and staff members a highly scalable and user-friendly communications network, FRP introduced Unified Communications with RingCentral.

Why it matters

- The brokerage is committed to continuing its fast-track acquisition campaign. To that end, it counts on enjoying uniform high-level services and support across its enterprise.
- Spectrum Business has become a valued partner for its expertise, range of technology solutions and willingness to listen and collaborate on every new step of the journey.



For Foundation Risk Partners, teamwork matters. "Spectrum Business has all these people who work for us, and can roll trucks quickly when needed," says Rich Dinan, Chief Information Officer, Foundation Risk Partners.

In a series of exploratory meetings with Spectrum Business, FRP leaders learned high-speed fiber circuits could be set up at each of their growing number of locations. Each circuit is capable of seamlessly channeling vast amounts of data at very predictable performance levels. The cost for each circuit could then be bundled into one monthly bill.

"Spectrum Business is a critical part of our infrastructure. Their technology partnership helps us stay focused on our growth path and on moving forward"

– Rich Dinan, Chief Information Officer, Foundation Risk Partners (FRP)

These circuits were critical in better capturing market opportunities and managing client service at each location under a single unifying network. For the brokerage, the move to [Dedicated Fiber Internet \(DFI\)](#) proved a success.

"Ryan McBride, our account manager, was really persistent about the advantages of Dedicated Fiber Internet," Dinan explains. "As we dealt with our initial internet connections, and getting things addressed, Ryan helped us to understand what Spectrum Business could offer us in terms of internet."

Today, Foundation Risk Partners has fiber circuits transmitting data to and from each of its 182 locations. A new Dedicated Fiber Internet installation is initiated whenever a new site is added.

A network to harmonize operations

As Foundation Risk Partners grew in size and scale, it needed a uniform IT backbone to harmonize its various working parts. For the insurance industry, network standardization and the ability to manage business via a single portal are critical in addressing the responsibilities of governance and regulatory compliance.

"We're constantly bringing in new offices," Dinan notes. "There are many different state agencies that have strict regulations we must



Managed Network Edge gives Foundation Risk Partners a portal from which to manage their nationwide infrastructure. This is vital as they pursue their fast-growth strategy.

comply with. Such a huge governance component requires clear central oversight.”

FRP’s business is becoming increasingly cloud-based, and one immediate priority was improving IT security at each location. To best handle the vast troves of information they require, FRP leaders must directly connect to the internet securely at each local branch, and in a way that is secure and centrally controlled.

When McBride suggested [Managed Network Edge](#), a tool for simplifying and augmenting a networking infrastructure within a single platform, FRP leadership picked up on its advantages right away.

“Managed Network Edge was a massive game-changer for us,” Dinan explains. “From an overall security standpoint, it is a good product to begin with, with its Meraki firewall and switches. But when you get into the depths of managing it, that’s where Spectrum Business really steps up. It’s the maintenance, management, prioritization, configuration and not having to be experts on it ourselves that are huge.”

The Meraki firewall delivers secure data management from each location to the operations center. As more offices come online, leadership has been happy with what Managed Network Edge can do, as well as the ease with which adjustments can be made along the way.

McBride notes the platform is set up to automatically identify critical network issues and notify senior IT staff via a secure portal. “However, we do all the proactive monitoring for them,” he explains.

Communications built around simplicity

As Foundation Risk Partners worked to achieve greater harmonization across its enterprise, the need to update communications became clear. Individual offices used different voice systems with different hardware, sometimes outdated or even obsolete. A single voice system was needed, one that could be used and implemented with minimum strain across the enterprise.

McBride introduced [Unified Communications with RingCentral](#), a comprehensive collaboration and

communication platform designed to augment and extend traditional telecom services. Right away, FRP leaders were impressed. A pilot program soon expanded as more and more offices took up the new system. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

“The slick interface, really strong controls and overall simplicity are the biggest things,” Dinan explains. “Unified Communications with RingCentral allows us to move 90% of our company to soft phone only, which obviously cuts down on our service and support expense. Add to that the fact we now have a vast communications service designed to fit in the pocket of each employee.”

Cost and quick installation were also key considerations in selecting the new system. Ease of integration with key management systems is another plus. Finally, Dinan notes the presence of Spectrum Business support in managing any issues that come up:

“We sell insurance. Do we really need to have technical experts on phone systems on staff? With Spectrum Business, the answer is no.”

To date, Unified Communications with RingCentral is being used by over 2,300 FRP team members.

“While we need to have some knowledge internally, we don’t have to have experts on staff just to manage my network. We can have Spectrum Business do it for us, which helps us better achieve economies of scale.”

– Rich Dinan, Chief Information Officer, Foundation Risk Partners (FRP)

Change made easier with a co-managed relationship

FRP leaders appreciate the Spectrum Business approach to developing their co-managed relationship over time.

“Having a trusted advisor is really important to us, one with a proactive approach to things,” Dinan explains. “We have had vendors who say: ‘Here’s a tool. Tell us how you want it configured.’ No. We want them to tell us how we should configure it. Spectrum Business gets that.”

Also appreciated is the depth of technical and engineering expertise at hand with Spectrum Business, and its ability to use its vast scale to resolve issues. “Their size makes a difference, by making it less expensive and requiring less overhead than for us to do it ourselves,” Dinan notes. “We looked at the cost of having internal staff, and we saw a 30% uptick in IT productivity by letting Spectrum Business do it for us instead.”

“Having Spectrum Business is especially important when it comes to scalability. How can we continue to grow if we don’t have a great partner to help us along the path?”

– Rich Dinan, Chief Information Officer, Foundation Risk Partners (FRP)

If there is a service issue at one of the offices, a Spectrum Business emergency tech support team is already working on it by the time brokerage personnel get notified. If an innovative service feature is introduced, Dinan not only receives a full readout of what it offers, but a knowledgeable perspective on how it might best be used.



Unified Communications with RingCentral offers Foundation Risk Partners a tool to align different agencies and offices around common goals. It is simple to use yet highly sophisticated.

“We go out, do the installations, all the cabling, and go over everything to make sure they have what they needed,” McBride adds. “That drastically reduces how much their team has to be out in the field, and also how much money they have to spend on other vendors.”

Having such expertise, not to mention documentation at every point of the servicing process, allows Foundation Risk Partners to operate more nimbly. In the past, documentation was a challenge as every acquisition brought more complexity. The partnership with Spectrum Business helps create Dinan calls “rigor around change management,” which is particularly helpful for compliance purposes.

Most important for them is having a partner who listens.

“It’s very clear with Spectrum Business that our communications aren’t falling on deaf ears,” Dinan notes. “It’s a totally collaborative relationship where we are constantly growing, and we are growing together. Which is fantastic, because our goals are aligned.”

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