

BRINGING CLARITY, SIMPLICITY AND EFFICIENCY TO THE IP SPACE AT HD SUPPLY

Case Study

CUSTOMER

HD Supply

WEBSITE

hdsupply.com

INDUSTRY

Construction product supply

At a glance:

Industrial distributor with more than 15,000 employees at 600 North American locations

Situation:

HD Supply needed better control of IP provisioning and more efficient server configurations

Solution:

The Men & Mice Suite

"Men & Mice was the strongest option. Engineers have been wanting a product like this for years. It gives us the granularity necessary for all of our IT groups to participate without stepping on each other's toes."

- Ford Boswell is a senior infrastructure manager for HD Supply, one of the largest industrial distributors in North America. When HD Supply went looking for an IPAM solution, it considered several products.

Men & Mice Solves Conflicts in IP Reservations, an "Age-old Problem"

HD Supply is a leading supplier of construction, maintenance and repair operations products for multifamily, hospitality, municipality, commercial property and other large-scale facilities. With more than 15,000 associates working from 600 locations in North America, HD Supply's IT environment includes two data centers, one on each coast. Ford Boswell is responsible for many infrastructure services, including account provisioning. "Having Men & Mice in place is a significant benefit. We were having some conflicts in IP reservations. It's an age-old problem that affects every large network," said Boswell. "We had no way to accurately determine if a certain IP was being used."

HD Supply's IPAM challenge was not with dynamic IP assignment, but with IP address management in the server space, where records are static and less subject to change. "To be sure we were provisioning appropriately, we needed to find a free IP for a particular resource," Boswell added. HD Supply's infrastructure team is composed of multiple relatively autonomous sub-teams. Historically, each had its own processes for IP reservation management. "Having a number of players, each using open-source or custom-developed tools—without tie-ins to our DNS solution—was creating conflicts." Where multiple devices compete for the same IP space, users can be abruptly disconnected from the network, and even worse, too many conflicts can cause outages.

Reliable provisioning and unified server configuration "protects our business"

According to Boswell, "Men & Mice makes IP provisioning much more reliable. With it, we are now able to look at an IP, see if it exists in DNS, and identify the host. It gives us a much better sense of where resources had been provisioned already. Without that DNS tie-in, the inability to adequately find resources and trace them back to their appropriate IP would be a problem."

Implementing the Men & Mice Suite has improved more than HD Supply's IP space: "As important as the provisioning benefit has been, to me the overarching benefit has been the ability to unify how we manage the DHCP servers. Prior to Men & Mice, we configured each server individually, which opened us to configuration errors and misalignment between the servers themselves. Now our Data Com team publishes a master scope out to hundreds of devices, and we have the assurance of knowing each device is getting the same configuration. It protects our business from potentially catastrophic IT problems," Boswell stated.

HD Supply implemented Men & Mice on their own. Boswell included the following: "I often tell people I don't work for a construction supply company, I work for an IT company. We are a group of IT engineers who have a pretty significant breadth of experience. We are experts in this space, and I can tell you the Men & Mice product is very well designed. Men & Mice has developed the kind of tool that my engineers would have developed for themselves given the chance."

