

USCarrier Case Study: Wholesale

CASE STUDY

The challenge

USCarrier Telecom, LLC (“USCarrier,” USCarrier.com) provides fiber-optic transport services for regional and national telecommunications and wireless carriers in the Southeastern United States, and was looking to extend its reach. Birmingham, Alabama seemed a ripe prospect, with several existing customers indicating they wanted capacity there. But there was a slight dilemma: USCarrier had no network of its own in Birmingham and with no clear solutions to extend its existing network to Birmingham, it remained on the drawing board for several years.



That is, until Charter Business® came along. Charter approached USCarrier about building the needed fiber network infrastructure in Birmingham. At first, USCarrier wasn’t so sure about Charter. “Charter wasn’t widely known to compete in the wholesale environment, so it wasn’t the first thought that crossed our mind,” said Greg Frikor, USCarrier’s director of sales. Also, Charter’s own network was centered on a headend in nearby Leeds, not in Birmingham city proper.

The solution

Charter laid out a plan for building a 26-mile, OC-192 fiber ring in Birmingham. The plan also called for setting up co-locations at the local telephone company’s central office in the city and then building a fiber run connecting Birmingham with USCarrier’s network in Montgomery.

The fact that the network plan would create fiber routes separate from the local telephone company was a big selling point for a company committed to providing reliable network capacity.

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Charter’s sales team, led by Selling Partner Account Executive Barry Navarre also assured USCarrier that the complex construction project could be completed in just five months to meet a critical deadline demanded by a USCarrier client. “Barry and the team did a great job in alleviating that stress and saying ‘We are adept at this construction and we can do this project,’” Frikor said.

If USCarrier was pleased with the plan, it was more than pleased with the project team Charter assembled to build out the network. The USCarrier facility engineers met with the Charter project team weekly and made frequent trips to inspect the progression of the construction. “I think that’s where Charter really excelled,” Frikor said. That team “made us feel important, even though we are a smaller carrier,” he said. “That was significant because we needed to know they were going to put the resources in to make it work.”

No easy task

The work itself was by no means as easy. The City of Birmingham features numerous railroad crossings, and to extend lines underneath them requires armloads of rights-of-way permits and approvals from city officials and the railroad owners. But Charter engineers found a creative way around that obstacle.

“They took it upon themselves to find an alternate path, and they found a provider that had already built a network in the metro area — it eliminated seven crossings,” Frikor said. “They were able to adapt in several scenarios to meet the timeline, and we are extremely grateful for that.”

Charter did in fact meet that critical deadline, and with the capacity online USCarrier already has clients buying wholesale capacity.



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“We are expecting additional growth,” Frikor added. “And we are also looking at Charter for other opportunities. After our experience with this construction, we would definitely consider them.”

All in all, it was Charter’s willingness to go out of its way to make the project work despite obstacles that most impressed Frikor. “The attention that they provided us went a long way in establishing the relationship” he said.

Future opportunities

It may well be a long-term relationship at that. For Charter, the project not only brings a good wholesale customer on board, but it also opens the door for future deals where Charter may buy capacity from USCarrier. “We truly see USCarrier as a partner, not just as a customer,” Navarre said.