

Streamlined security enhances productivity of furniture retailer's remote workforce

Case Study



Founded in 1948, American Signature, Inc. (ASI) is a family-owned and -operated furniture retailer based in Columbus, Ohio. It is the parent company of Designer Looks with more than 120 stores across the U.S. ASI's Designer Looks offerings, including ComforTECH products, provide on-trend, high-end styles made with incredible quality details like hand-stenciled finishes, solid wood surfaces or 100 percent feathers, without the high-end price. For more information on ASI, Designer Looks and to locate your nearest store, visit www.DesignerLooks.com.

How can a midsize retailer effectively protect remote workers, while ensuring security measures do not slow down operations?

American Signature Furniture transitioned to a largely remote workforce in 2020, and when COVID-19 restrictions began to lift, it stayed with that business model. What started as a pandemic necessity became a fundamental shift in operations.

This shift required the company's security team to fundamentally rethink and strengthen their approach to protecting users, applications, and data.

In addition to newly remote back-office and support employees across the U.S., Hoke's team needed to secure corporate headquarters and more than 120 stores. By utilizing Netskope's NPA, not only was the team able to provide access to needed tools and services, but they were able to provide pinpointed access for third-party contractors and vendors that needed access. "For example," Hoke says, "we work with a company that provides additional customer service support for our call center. They need access to certain internal systems for assisting customers with questions, delivery scheduling, and ordering."

Remote connectivity to corporate resources was available only via virtual private network (VPN), which was cumbersome to use and hampered application performance. Hoke began researching alternative solutions.

"We're a regional, privately owned furniture company that has seen tremendous growth. The past few years have been tricky, as we have navigated the transition to the cloud and to remote work. Having Netskope as a partner has made that process much smoother."

– Sheldon Hoke, Security Analyst, American Signature Furniture



AMERICAN SIGNATURE
FURNITURE®

Profile

Industry	Region	Established	Employees
Retail	United States	1930s	4,000



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Challenges

- Protecting applications and data as employees move to remote work
- Improving performance of secure applications
- Securing connections for third-party partners

Solutions

- Netskope NPA limits users' access to specific resources they need
- Low latency minimizes security's impact on application performance

Results

- Enhanced security relative to legacy environment
- Latency of 20 Mbps, vs. 50 – 60 Mbps with VPN connections
- Increased productivity for internal staff and business partners
- Improved customer satisfaction and brand goodwill

Achieving zero trust in the cloud using Netskope Private Access

A successful proof of concept convinced American Signature Furniture that Netskope Private Access (NPA) would meet its needs. The solution limits application access to users who have explicit authorization to utilize that particular resource. For those with the right permissions, NPA provides secure direct access via end-to-end traffic encryption, regardless of the user's or application's location. For everyone else, resources are shielded from discovery and attacks.

By determining permissions based on user identity and contextual factors—such as the device's security posture and the user's behavior and risk score—Netskope Private Access offers cloud-based zero trust network access (ZTNA).

The American Signature Furniture security team created policies within NPA that mimicked the rules of their on-premises firewalls. They also integrated the Netskope solution with their new antivirus tool from a third party.

"We set up accounts in Netskope for employees and for some of our third-party partners," Hoke explains. "This saves them from having to use VPN to connect to our network, and it enables us to limit what resources they can use. Before, we would give them VPN access and turn them loose on our network. Now, they can access only what they need."

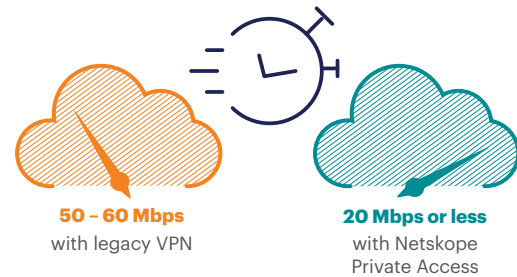
Throughout the configuration process, the Netskope support team responded quickly anytime Hoke and his colleagues had a question. "I can't say enough about how much I feel supported by the Netskope team," he says. "If there is an issue, they listen to their customers, take action immediately, and do what they can to make it right."

Better security converges with faster application performance

By eliminating the VPN, American Signature Furniture stopped backhauling all traffic through the data center, which improved both application performance and staff productivity. "If I run a speed test with NPA enabled, then run the same test with NPA disabled, the results are almost exactly the same," Hoke says. "The connection speed with Netskope Private Access is 3-4 times faster than legacy VPN."

Faster application performance has big benefits for remote employees. For example, the customer care team uses soft phones for customer service calls. "Previously, they had issues with the VPN dropping," Hoke says. "A customer might wait to talk to someone, then be disconnected mid-call. That could result in an upset customer or a lost sale. Ever since we rolled out NPA, dropped calls are no longer happening."

Latency in performance of core business applications:



Equally important, NPA's zero trust connectivity strengthens security throughout the company's infrastructure. "We get software updates out much faster, and we force our security stack onto every machine that connects," Hoke says.

A recent incident demonstrates the benefits: "Last Friday, our soft phone provider experienced an attempted Trojan download from their Amazon S3 bucket," Hoke reports. "The provider didn't know about it, but Netskope caught it. Due to the policy we set up, NPA blocked the attack, and our antivirus software never even saw it."

A year after the highly successful NPA deployment, American Signature Furniture is rolling out Netskope Next Gen Secure Web Gateway. "As the Netskope platform continues to advance, we will look to incorporate the new capabilities in our IT security portfolio aligned with overall security roadmap priorities," Hoke says.



Netskope, a global cybersecurity leader, is redefining cloud, data, and network security to help organizations apply Zero Trust principles to protect data. The Netskope Intelligent Security Service Edge (SSE) platform is fast, easy to use, and secures people, devices, and data anywhere they go. Learn how Netskope helps customers be ready for anything on their SASE journey, visit [netskope.com](https://www.netskope.com).