

GHD



When global professional services company GHD merged with North American engineering consultancy Conestoga-Rovers and Associates (CRA), it added more than 3,000 employees in 100 offices, including 50 small sites.

They needed a simple, cost-effective solution to enable the rapid deployment of those new sites onto the company's network. Riverbed SteelConnect has helped GHD achieve this, fueling stronger collaboration amongst its project teams spread across the globe, business agility and cost savings of an anticipated USD 1 million a year.

### Company description

GHD is one of the world's leading professional services companies operating in the global markets of water, energy and resources, environment, property and buildings, and transportation. It provides engineering, architecture, environmental and construction services to private and public sector clients.

GHD employs more than 8,500 people in 200+ offices to deliver projects across the entire asset project lifecycle—from planning to designing, sustaining, enhancing and retiring assets.

“GHD has a longstanding relationship with Riverbed—their technology does what it says it's going to do. Over time, we've replaced a lot of competitors' equipment with Riverbed solutions. The team has really listened to us, and as a result, they've enabled us to create a network environment for GHD that truly performs and helps us meet client expectations.”

Elizabeth Harper  
CIO  
GHD

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## In Brief

## Challenges

- Achieve rapid deployment of branch networking solutions at a lower cost
- Ensure seamless collaboration amongst project teams spread across the globe
- Provide employees at 50 new small sites with access to GHD's complex network of applications, services and cloud environment
- Reduce time and cost to maintain small office networking solutions

## Solution

- Riverbed® SteelConnect™

## Benefits

- Zero-touch, rapid deployment of small offices onto GHD's network (50 offices deployed in only 4 weeks), resulting in cost-savings
- Simplified global collaboration, improving project delivery
- Reduced management, maintenance and telephony costs (anticipate saving up to 75% of global telecommunications costs over the medium term, and USD 1 million a year once solution is rolled out globally)
- Positively impacted culture by providing access to all of GHD systems regardless of location
- Ability to connect direct into public cloud networks
- Greater business agility

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## Ensuring seamless collaboration across the globe

GHD, a leader in engineering, architecture, environmental and construction services, has a complex IT landscape which spans more than 10 countries, 8,500 employees, leverages 3,000 business and technical applications, and includes GHD's own private cloud.

IT and the use of emerging technology are foundational to how GHD delivers successfully to its clients. In addition to leveraging more than 3,000 business and technical applications—many of which are data and bandwidth intensive design tools—GHD hosts its own cloud to

support ongoing client needs. It is an effective but complex environment that powers the collaboration of global project teams as well as client engagement.

In 2014, GHD merged with Canadian engineering consultancy Conestoga-Rovers and Associates (CRA), inheriting 3,000 new employees. Of the new offices they had to integrate into the wider GHD business, 50 were small and remote sites. Larger offices were brought on to the GHD network through more traditional approaches—a process that would take a full year to

complete—but these smaller offices, which are typically set up to be close to a client, had to be brought on more quickly. GHD was looking for a cost-effective solution to provision these sites, and it needed to be both easy to deploy and to maintain given the limited amount of IT resources at the locations.

“To me, ensuring that all our people—regardless of location—can do their jobs every day and have the tools they need to be successful is absolutely critical,” says Elizabeth Harper, CIO, GHD.

## Cost-effective, easy to stand up, simple to maintain

GHD has been on a journey with Riverbed going back six years, and has already had success implementing key parts of the Riverbed Application Performance Platform across their global business. They use **Riverbed® SteelHead™** to optimize network traffic and accelerate delivery and peak performance of applications; **Riverbed® SteelCentral™** for end-to-end visibility across networks, applications and end-user experience; and **Riverbed® SteelFusion™** to simplify the management of branch office IT operations. (Read more about GHD’s use of SteelHead and SteelCentral here: <https://www.riverbed.com/customer-stories/GHD.html>)

“GHD has a longstanding relationship with Riverbed—their technology does what it says it’s going to do. Over time, we’ve replaced a lot of competitors’ equipment with Riverbed solutions,” explains Harper. “The team has really listened to us, and as a result, they’ve enabled us to create a network environment for GHD that truly performs and helps us meet client expectations.”

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Elizabeth Harper  
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When it came time to explore an SD-WAN solution, Harper and her team evaluated several options. “We did a really thorough assessment of the space, and Riverbed SteelConnect just ticked all the boxes - a very low, almost zero-touch deployment, easy to stand up, low levels of ongoing maintenance and support and cost savings,” says Harper.

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## Global consistency with zero-touch deployment

Harper says the roll-out was completed to schedule and describes the results as phenomenal.

“The deployment was almost zero touch,” she explains. “What SteelConnect allows us to do is to preconfigure a device using a cloud portal before delivering it to the physical site. This means that a non-IT person at the small office can follow simple instructions, plug the device in and have everything up and running in minutes instead of days.”

Harper estimates that if GHD had chosen a traditional networking approach, the project would have taken at least three months to complete. Using the Riverbed SteelConnect solution, the timeframe was four weeks.

This has dramatically reduced the cost of implementation in sites that are geographically dispersed across the US and Canada.

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The result is a business that is more connected, with a more consistent network experience. “We’ve connected smaller offices in a way they’ve never experienced before,” she says. “For the first time, end users have access to the full raft of our business services—just as though they were in a large office—and they really feel like they’re part of the same organization. This has made a tremendous cultural impact.”

One of the most obvious changes of the upgrade is VOIP as standard, “with all the benefits of a unified communication structure,” says Harper. “Not only does this simplify sharing and collaboration, but we anticipate saving around 75% of our global telecommunications costs over the medium term.”

The next step, continues Harper, is to extend the benefits of SD-WAN to larger GHD offices. “We’ll be migrating larger offices next, and we expect to see cost benefits of more than a \$1 million a year.”

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SteelConnect, says Harper, delivers the necessary agility for a growing business, and helps the company deliver a significant competitive advantage. “In the six years I’ve been here we’ve brought 16 companies into GHD. We see SteelConnect as a key enabler in being able to integrate newer organizations more quickly.”

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Harper says the successful delivery of the SteelConnect project has invigorated the IT team, and that GHD is enthused about the possibilities of a modern, software-defined network. “There is an opportunity for GHD to differentiate itself with new types of services,” she says. “We want to be seen as a leader in client services in our industry, supporting projects around the world. New technologies will be an enabler for us, allowing us to do more with less.”

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#### About Riverbed

Riverbed, at more than \$1 billion in annual revenue, is the leader in application performance infrastructure, delivering the most complete platform for the hybrid enterprise to ensure applications perform as expected, data is always available when needed, and performance issues can be proactively detected and resolved before impacting business performance. Riverbed enables hybrid enterprises to transform application performance into a competitive advantage by maximizing employee productivity and leveraging IT to create new forms of operational agility. Riverbed’s 28,000+ customers include 97% of the *Fortune* 100 and 98% of the *Forbes* Global 100. Learn more at [riverbed.com](https://riverbed.com).

The Riverbed logo consists of the word "riverbed" in a lowercase, bold, orange sans-serif font.