



Customer Stories:

Dandamudi's Inc.



# Powerful network

solutions help Dandamudi's design kitchens and build relationships

- **Business Needs** - Better ways for design staff to work with one another and with clients and vendors
- **Networking Solution** - Dedicated Internet and a software-defined network that supply the reliability, speed and mobility staff need to succeed
- **Business Value** - Edge-to-edge technologies provide near real-time intelligence, enabling Dandamudi's to sense and adapt to change like never before; they also promote seamless collaboration and give staff the freedom to work wherever the job or their imagination takes them
- **Industry Focus** - Residential and commercial kitchen design
- **Size** - Privately held

## About Dandamudi's, Inc.

For more than a quarter of a century, Dandamudi's has outfitted dream kitchens for discriminating homeowners. Its commitment to quality and service has been showcased through collaboration with prestigious artisans and architects. The business expanded 15 years ago when it began working with developers; since then Dandamudi's has furnished more than 7,000 luxury residential units with kitchens, closets, bathrooms, sliding door systems, wardrobes and furnishings.

## The situation

As Dandamudi's business grew, it became more difficult to supply the bandwidth its designers needed to share the large Computer-Aided Design (CAD) files and other work products with one another and with clients and vendors. Worried about the reliability of the network, staff found themselves backing up files many times each day to protect their work. When Dandamudi's purchased and began renovating a building that would become its new headquarters, the company sought help in creating a network with the connectivity and throughput that staff and visitors required.

## Solution

Because the firm already used some AT&T services, Dandamudi's staff turned to AT&T for help in engineering a network for its new headquarters. Its AT&T account team recommended Dedicated Internet Service and a Managed Wi-Fi Access Point to provide the high-speed connectivity its staff and clients needed, along with AT&T FlexWare<sup>SM</sup>, a software-defined network that provides flexible application-based routing, eliminating the need for separate routers. Finally, AT&T Collaborate<sup>TM</sup> enables staff to work together more easily thanks to features like chat, voice and video services.

## Creating beautiful spaces from concept to installation

Dandamudi's is a luxury design firm. Dandamudi's retail division serves residential clients and its commercial arm works with exclusive developments such as 340 on the Park and the Waldorf-Astoria Chicago, and dozens more.

Business Manager Eleanor Leichenko said architects and builders choose Dandamudi's because of the trust the company has built and maintained over the

past 25 years. "You build a relationship in one project that becomes the foundation for the next project," said Ms. Leichenko. "You get to know what they're looking for, so you can make suggestions early on that help to ease the whole process."

In addition to providing design services, the company also helps to find innovative pieces when customers are looking for something beyond its usual product line. "We've done a lot of sourcing to get the products such as closet systems or sliding door systems that they're looking for. For a landmark project we did a few years ago we helped source all the outdoor and amenity space furnishings," Ms. Leichenko said. "We were able to find things at a better rate and a higher quality, essentially becoming a one-stop shop for the customer."

Most clients who come to Dandamudi's want the finest and understand that they're making an investment, but sometimes the company has to provide some education. "There are a lot of products out there that are very similar in styling to ours," she said. "But you have to consider the quality, such as where we're sourcing woods. Our product lines are meant to last. Customers are getting something that's going to withstand several decades, even as styles and fashions change."



## Equipping employees to succeed

Ms. Leichenko's responsibilities as Dandamudi's business manager are many and varied, ranging from purchasing and marketing to philanthropy and information technology management. "As in any small business, everyone wears a lot of hats," she said. "I really just try to keep things flowing. This means ensuring that our space is in good working condition and that people have what they need to succeed in their roles, whether that's equipment or other things that they use at work."

Staying on top of technology can be a challenge for the small firm. "We're not a roomful of techies," she said. "We're just people who want to sit down and move through our work without any interruptions."

Because the designers' CAD files are enormous, it can be difficult to supply enough bandwidth to enable easy file sharing. "The designers were constantly having to back up their drives out of fear that they were going to lose work," she said.

And in addition to being slow at times, the company's network wasn't always reliable. "As soon as there's an interruption, we're all in a panic," Ms. Leichenko said. "We just needed someone who could reassure us that everything is fine -- that they'll take care of it."

## A solution to grow with the company

When Dandamudi's decided to move most of its operations into a freestanding structure, officials contacted AT&T for help in designing a better network. "We're renovating a building that's going to be a beautiful working showroom/office/meeting space.

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**Eleanor Leichenko**

Business Manager, Dandamudi's, Inc.

A small team of employees has already moved to the new building, but eventually most of us are going to be there," she said. "There will be a lot of people filtering through and we can't be as siloed in thought and space as we have been in the past. We really needed a solution that was going to grow with us."

Ms. Leichenko said she and the rest of the staff lacked the time and experience to select and manage the company network. "We wanted to rely on someone else to be the experts and then to be there whenever we need help," she said. Dandamudi's already used some AT&T services, so Ms. Leichenko asked the sales team for recommendations. "We described our needs and they made it really easy. It was a no-brainer to go with an AT&T solution," she said.

## Speedy, powerful networking from day one

AT&T recommended Dedicated Internet Service, a complete business-class solution with high-speed access and 24-hour support, along with a Managed Wi-Fi Access Point. Dandamudi's also chose AT&T Collaborate, a hosted service that lets employees

use chat, voice, video and desktop sharing to work together more easily, and AT&T FlexWare, a platform that virtualizes functions to make network management easier and reduce costs.

AT&T FlexWare is a software-defined network platform that is one of the most advanced of its kind in the industry. The network powers a new model, edge computing, which moves data computation from individual devices into the cloud in a way that feels seamless. “Before this it just didn’t feel like the flow was in place; everyone was a little hesitant, and worried about saving files all day long,” she said. “There was an uneasiness, but now things have mellowed out for everyone.”

Ms. Leichenko admits to some concern about the transition to the new headquarters. “Our lease was over on August 31st and on September 1st we were in the new building. We needed everything to work on day one,” she said. “Our AT&T sales team understood our situation and what we needed.”

September 1st found Dandamudi’s project team comfortably housed in the new building with a robust network supporting their important work. The network’s speed and reliability have freed designers

to focus on their assignments. “There have been no interruptions,” she said. “I feel like our people are finally able to work at a speed that works for them, on a network that’s able to handle all their files.”

Employees are happily discovering what they can do with their new resources. For example, the ‘Locate Me’ feature of Collaborate can ring multiple lines sequentially, simultaneously, or based on time of day, day of week, or specific situation. “Now I don’t need to be physically at my desk for somebody to be able to reach me,” Ms. Leichenko said.

### “A team of 100 working behind me”

Ms. Leichenko said Dandamudi’s liked the speed with which its network was installed, and the assistance staff received from the AT&T technicians. “They stayed to make sure we were comfortable, which surprised me from a customer service standpoint,” she said. “Usually guys in the field want to move on to the next project, but they stuck around just to make sure that we were in a good place.”

An easy-to-use portal enables her to log on and follow up on any trouble tickets. “They’re really diligent about calling and sending you messages so you know they’re working on it,” she said. “It feels like there’s me and a team of 100 behind me that are working on this issue and I don’t need to be the only one stressing out about it.”

The company also appreciates the managed aspect of its AT&T services. “As soon as we have even a tiny bit of an issue, it’s tracked,” she said. The company recently needed to disconnect its network briefly to enable contractors to move an elevator line. “It was only off for 10 minutes and I

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got two phone calls and three emails letting me know our system was down and offering help,” she said. “I like that there’s always somebody on top of this.”

Dandamudi’s has added several new lines since the initial installation with no issues. “This shows us that the products are able to grow with us easily as we start moving more members of our team over to this building,” she said.

## Mobility fuels creativity

Ms. Leichenko believes the company’s new network and services will nurture the staff’s imagination. “Creative people sometimes need a different outlet. They don’t want to be staring at the person sitting across from them all day,” she said. “They need to get up, move around and find inspiration.”

Thanks to abundant connectivity, staff can now work from anywhere in the building. “They’re more mobile, now that they’re not dependent on a jack to get them through the day,” she said. “Being able to move between floors and work from a different space is going to be huge for us. Having the wireless capability and our AT&T Collaborate system in place is going to allow us to have more creativity.”

The network will also help designers share their vision with clients. “Some people, like me, can’t envision a new space,” she said. “With our new setup we’ll be able to show people on the fly how their new kitchen will look with natural light, or in a different color, as they start adding cabinetry. It lets us stay more on the cutting edge.”

AT&T edge processing gives Dandamudi’s staff the best experience with their demanding design applications.

## Small business, big ideas

Ms. Leichenko said she would definitely recommend the AT&T services Dandamudi’s is using to her peers. “It’s a really good business solution,” she said. “We trusted the sales team to provide us with products that we needed and would be using.”

She described Dandamudi’s as a small business that operates like a big one, providing high-end solutions to some of the nation’s largest and best-known developers, architects and builders. “Small business, big picture, big ideas,” she said of Dandamudi’s.

On the other hand, she said, AT&T is a big business that takes care of its customers as if it were a small company, from the sales team to the technicians and product teams. “We liked being able to connect with a lot of the people that have been working on our project and our setup,” she said. “You can reach out to them and get a person who knows you, what you’ve ordered, and how it works.”

She’s confident that in time Dandamudi’s will be able to do more with its new technology. “We want people walking in to be comfortable and able to connect to the internet and feel that they’re in a place that’s keeping up with the times,” she said. “Down the road we’ll put the products that we’ve chosen with AT&T to even better use. I think our clients are going to walk in and think, ‘Yes, this is what I’m looking for.’”

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