Rolling out an SD-WAN solution to their sites and providing an SD-WAN managed service

At a glance

> **Customer name:**
> ABP Food Group

> **Industry:** Manufacturing/ Food Production

Challenge
Standardise the WAN by consolidating 12 incumbent providers into a single network and security solution. Avoid production losses from network downtime.

Solution
Rolling out an SD-WAN solution to their sites and providing an SD-WAN managed service.

Benefits
Increased visibility, resilience, and performance across the network.

Overview

ABP Food Group is one of Europe's leading food processors, providing quality beef to thousands of customers across the world. With locations in nine countries across Ireland, UK, and Europe, ABP Food Group works with a network of over 35,000 farmers. The business turns over €3B, employs 11,000 people, and has supplied retailers, wholesalers, and food service providers for over sixty years.
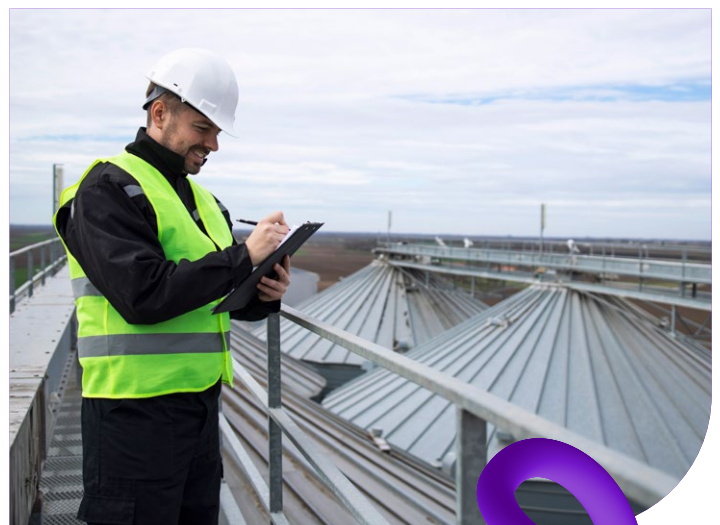
The Challenge:

The Group had grown through acquisition and operated four divisions across approximately 60 sites. Each division had their own WAN MPLS contracts and a separate security/remote access solution from a variety of service providers.

The multiple service provider engagement had caused varied service levels across the group with some poorly performing sites. With multiple solutions provided by different providers, it was time-consuming to uncover the root cause of faults and implement guaranteed fixes. Any requirement to increase capacity or make changes to the WAN was challenging and even simple requests such as a change on a managed firewall could take weeks. The internal IT team was regularly managing issues, rather than working to support revenue-generating endeavours.

At the start of the first COVID lockdown in March 2020, the business was working at 160% capacity to keep supermarket shelves stocked. During this period any network outage would cause significant disruption and commercial penalties. The business recognised the need for additional bandwidth and resilience to support the increased demand on the network and most importantly the need to consolidate the twelve group-wide incumbent providers into a single, trustworthy network and security solution provider. This would standardise their WAN making it easier to manage, simplify the associated WAN contracts and deliver cost savings to the business.

An upcoming WAN renewal negotiation was the perfect opportunity to embark on a WAN transformation project, part of which was a requirement to investigate SD-WAN as a means of delivering greater bandwidth and resilience at a reduced cost. SD-WAN offered the efficiencies of a single, ubiquitous, and always-on WAN which would better suit the always-on nature of the business.

The Solution:

During the initial WAN RFI process, Kerv Connect highlighted the benefits of a next-gen SD-WAN that the Group had not considered in the scope of their WAN transformation project. This expertise and insight lead to Kerv Connect being invited to respond to the Group's WAN Transformation RFP.

Kerv Connect ousted 12 bidders in the extensive RFP process to win the contract for the consolidation, simplification, and standardisation of the WAN and Network Security platform. As part of their response, Kerv Connect recommended a POC for problematic production sites where the power of SD-WAN was able to provide tangible value, improving capacity at one site and application performance at another.

Kerv Connect's strategic partnerships with both Dell and VMware won the customer's confidence with a consolidated solution that was based on the market-leading VeloCloud SD-WAN solution ably supported by Fortinet for Security and Remote Access. Additionally, Kerv Connect's proposal included fully resilient connections for all sites, globally, with some sites adopting 4G services where wired connectivity was difficult to provision reliably. Kerv Connect's solution included design, installation, and a fully managed service to ensure that new technology did not place added operational pressures on an already busy IT team.

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> **Kerv Connect has proven to be the trusted advisor who helped us make sense of SD-WAN and how it supports our ambitious "one network" strategy. Of the various responses received on our WAN tender, Kerv Connect stood out with their approach to solution design and their strong team. The proof of concept installation has already delivered tangible benefit to ABP Food Group and we are excited to get started on the full SD-WAN rollout with them."**

John Armstrong
Group IT Director of ABP Food Group

The Results

Visibility
All divisions have read-only access to the SD-WAN management platform which provides granular visibility of all traffic across the WAN. This has provided actionable insight that is already returning benefits within the broader ABP IT teams.

Application Prioritisation
Ensuring that critical business applications enjoy priority over standard applications.

Resilience and Performance
Using multiple connections in active-active format to ensure heightened uptime and availability. Further, benefitting from real-time adjustments in application traffic flows to guarantee application performance.

Flexibility
Adding capacity is now as simple as adding it to the "connectivity pool" at any one site.

Cloud Access
Benefitting from Velocloud's Cloud Gateway Architecture for optimised and resilient access to applications in the cloud (SaaS and IaaS).

Security and Segmentation
The ability to use a single SD-WAN platform within which the divisions are virtually segmented from each other, enabling the Group to have "one network" and benefiting from tightly controlled inter-divisional interactions.

Get in touch with us

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