network transformation

One of Europe's leading food processors consolidates contracts and recoups savings on a single standardised solution.

This privately owned Agribusiness provides quality beef to thousands of retailers, wholesalers, and food service providers across the world from locations in nine countries across the UK and Europe. Four business divisions work with a network of over 45,000 farmers, employ 13,300 people and turn over €5B.

When management of multiple service providers began to affect business performance, Kerv supplied a single, standardised network solution group-wide, and delivered significant cost savings.

The Challenge

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

The Solution

A centralised SD-WAN solution offered an integrated service experience across rationalised underlay. Kerv's SD-WAN managed service provided proactive monitoring and troubleshooting.

The Result

A simplified solution increased visibility, resilience, and performance across the network while improving ROI.

Challenge

Following a period of growth through acquisition, this organisation 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. Management and monitoring across this diverse group of contracts was complex and convoluted. Uncovering the root cause of faults and implementing fixes was time-consuming, and increasing capacity or making changes to the WAN was challenging. 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. The business also operated in accordance with stringent regulations and directives. Any network outage threatened significant disruption to the processing line, causing unnecessary food wastage and incurring commercial penalties.

The business recognised the need for additional bandwidth and resilience to prevent costly production suspensions, and 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. SD-WAN offered the efficiencies of a single, ubiquitous, and always-on WAN which would better suit the always-on nature of the business.

Solution

Kerv highlighted the benefits of a next-gen SD-WAN to consolidate, simplify, and standardise the network.

Rationalising and optimising the existing connections and applying an intelligent overlay could serve the group objectives of all four divisions, with the flexibility to provide custom treatments to service the particular requirements of each. This always-on network was performance-assured with a reliable and predictable SLA framework and proactive monitoring.

Kerv ousted 12 bidders to win the contract. Kerv'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'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.

Kerv began by conducting a network exercise providing the transparency this Agribusiness needed to identify critical bandwidth requirements group-wide. The resulting report identified the level, amount and capacity of bandwidth utilised at each site, and recommended service downgrades and renegotiations in certain areas.

Controlled and efficient treatment of traffic over existing links drove a commercial benefit, and hard-to-reach and remote sites benefitted from multiple connections, where a single service provider had previously represented a single point of failure. During a POC for problematic production sites, the power of SD-WAN was able to provide tangible value, preventing a potential 4 hour outage which would have had serious financial implications.

Kerv's SD-WAN solution removed the requirement for further investment in WAN capacity and resilience saving the Group approximately £750k over 3 years.

RESULTS   Improved capacity, resilience and cost effectiveness.

Simplification

The network is standardised group-wide in a single contractual framework. It benefits from predictable SLAs and proactive monitoring and management without additional operational burden for the IT team.

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 IT teams.

Resilience and Performance

Using multiple connections in active-active format ensures heightened uptime and availability. Real-time adjustments in application traffic flows and prioritisation also guarantee critical application performance.

Security and Segmentation

Within a single SD-WAN platform, the divisions are virtually segmented from each other, enabling the Group to have 'one network' and benefiting from tightly controlled inter-divisional interactions.

Flexibility

Adding capacity is now as simple as adding it to the 'connectivity pool' at any one site. Deploying new sites is quick and easy.

Cost Savings

Kerv's SD-WAN solution was designed and deployed at a significantly lower price than the suggested MPLS equivalent.

"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 our organisation and we are excited to get started on the full SD-WAN rollout with them."

Group IT Director

kerv