

# ASM

# CATO

NETWORKS



## CASE STUDY

**VERTICAL:** Manufacturing  
**HEAD OFFICE:** Singapore & Hong Kong  
**GLOBAL FOOTPRINT:** USA, Western Europe, Asia  
**GLOBAL LOCATIONS:** 15 Locations  
4 Manufacturing Plants  
7 R&D Centres

# ASM SMT Boosts WAN Performance and Agility, Cuts Costs with Cato

## About ASM SMT

ASM SMT is a part of the ASM PT Group. The Group is based in Singapore and Hong Kong and is a leading global supplier of semiconductor process equipment for chip and circuit board manufacturers. ASM PT is separated into business segments of which the SMT sector decided to switch to the solution from Cato. The main ASM SMT sites are in Munich, Weymouth and Singapore. ASM SMT has locations globally, including the U.S. and several countries in Western Europe and Asia. Before Cato, ASM SMT's offices connected over a global meshed VPN topology overlaid on top of MPLS. Local Internet breakouts added Web filtering and WAN optimization hardware. Mobile users connected to firewalls at core regional locations for remote access.

## The Challenge: A Fast, Agile Global Network

Global suppliers need fast, agile networks to keep business processes moving among manufacturing plants, warehouses, customers and partners. As a leading supplier of Surface Mount Technology solutions for computer chip and circuit board manufacturers, ASM SMT is no exception. With offices spread globally from the west coast of the USA to the east coast of China, their globally spread SMT segment, found achieving such a goal a tall order.

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The solution worked okay, but it was very expensive and took a long time to provision,” says Ian Bleazard, ASM SMT IT Director of Infrastructure and Analytics. “We operate in China and Vietnam, where you can be looking at a 180-day lead time for connectivity. Six months can have a substantial negative business impact.”

With a typical office consisting of the usual stack of edge security products, firewalls, Web filters, etc. new site deployment was also dependent on multiple security vendors delivering on time, which, of course, often led to further delays, according to Bleazard. In many cases, each appliance had to be managed separately, so the configuration was a tedious and sizeable task at scale. Any changes to the regional firewalls had an impact on remote user connectivity. “With shared memory and CPU resources among firewall and remote access functions, the regional firewall appliances were often unfit for increasing demand,” says Bleazard.

### **ASM SMT Investigates SD-WAN, Chooses Cato**

ASM SMT sought a simpler solution that would deliver business agility, security, and good performance at a lower total cost of ownership. “SD-WAN was intriguing to us, so we set out to research the technology and some vendors,” says Mr. Bleazard. “Three vendors made our shortlist, but it soon became clear that there was only one all-encompassing winner.” The winner was Cato.

“Other vendors either lacked middle-mile backbone solutions, required backhauling of traffic between locations or couldn’t provide built-in WAN optimization and security functionality,” says Mr. Bleazard.

A trusted local vendor introduced ASM SMT to Cato. “Immediately we had a good feeling. Cato had a promising solution that could solve a lot of our issues and they presented it to us in a very honest, upfront manner.” ASM SMT put together a proof of concept (POC) project with Cato for three business locations.

“The idea was to throw some of the major issues we encountered with MPLS at the POC scenario. For example, we wanted to see how Cato would address speed issues with centralized Product Lifecycle Management software, SMB file copy, and videoconferencing performance over the WAN. During the POC, Cato improved performance more than 100 percent vs. MPLS.”

“It’s rare that you hear from users when things are going well, but, amazingly, during the POC we had users from all over the business thanking us and telling us how much it was improving their daily business productivity,” says Bleazard, “The productivity of those on the POC significantly increased and more importantly it removed some of their daily frustrations.”

## **Cato Delivers Agility and Performance at a Lower Cost than MPLS**

Convinced, ASM SMT proceeded with Cato deployment across the other locations. “Our MPLS contract had eight months left, so we could roll out Cato gradually,” says Mr. Bleazard. “Cato’s use of BGP made the rollout seamless, with dynamic routes published automatically as soon as a site came online. We were able to switch over with almost no outage, which is key, as any outage can cause issues with production and other key business functions.”.

The savings and performance grew as MPLS contracts expired and ASM SMT transitioned to Cato. “Cato’s pricing structure allowed a higher bandwidth among sites vs. MPLS and its packet loss mitigation feature helped a lot with VoIP and video packets reaching their destination without a break in communication.” He was also very pleased with Cato support. “Cato usually answered our emails within 10 minutes, and we were able to get someone on the phone quickly when something was important,” says Bleazard. “The general feeling was that support was there when we needed it.” ASM SMT has since begun rollout of the Cato VPN client as a replacement for the internal VPN gateways, a process that accelerated as the Covid-19 pandemic sent workers home, first in China and then everywhere else.

“Generally, you don’t transition technology during a crisis, but we felt we had to move a few hundred users—mostly the ones that use a lot of bandwidth—onto the Cato network for VPN and it worked out really well,” says Bleazard. “The VPN provides straight access to the Cato backbone and the services they need, rather than backhauling everything to the local office. They really like it and find it easy to use—and that’s rare. Having one console for everything makes the whole management process much simpler as well, and very much helped us stay on top of these unique circumstances.”

Overall Bleazard is very pleased with the Cato experience and plans to expand remote access using Cato and deployment to future locations. With Cato, ASM got the security and network performance they needed, converged into the one seamless solution for all sites, cloud resources, and mobile uses.

**Ian Bleazard,**  
**ASM SMT IT Director of Infrastructure and Analytics**