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CATO NETWORKS · CASE STUDY

Lion Adopts Cato to Achieve Fast, Secure Connectivity for Global Locations and Remote Users

About Lion

Lion Corporation is Japan's top manufacturer of beauty care products. Founded in 1891, it is also one of its oldest. Based in Tokyo, it has 23 office and manufacturing locations in Japan and 11 locations across the Asia Pacific Region. Before Cato, Lion Corporation connected its locations with Internet-based VPNs and multiple security appliances and services.

Lion Seeks Network Transformation for Office and Remote Users

Manufacturers face new challenges as network usage escalates and more employees work from home. How do they meet these challenges with minimum disruption, maximum performance, and airtight security?

Lion Corporation, Japan's top manufacturer of beauty care products—and one of its oldest—faced just such challenges. With 7,100 employees, 23 Japanese offices, and 11 global locations, Lion Corporation was looking at a future with an increasingly mobile remote workforce and more network usage in general.

"We saw that the work environment would change dramatically in the future and the use of the network would increase," says Eiichi Kobasako, Lion Corporation's Chief of Integrated Systems. "It used to be just fine if we were all connected, but now it was becoming more important to be connected securely at all times."

The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated remote work requirements dramatically as well. "It was clear many more people would be working remotely," says Atzuyuki Shiina, Lion Corporation Information Security Specialist.

Lion had been relying on VPN connections for both location and remote access connections. Security was provided separately by a combination of appliances and services. "Obviously our old network would not support all these new remote users," says Shiina. Lion was looking to accommodate additional remote users securely and blend connectivity and security across the entire network.

"We wanted to unify all the network components, such as security," says Kobasako. They needed a solution that would accomplish those goals while providing good performance for all users. Perhaps most important for Kobayashi, however, was that the network transition would have to cause as little disruption as possible.

"We're in the manufacturing business," says Kobasako, "with lots of offices, factories, laboratories, and heavy factory equipment. Drastic changes and big disruptions are not acceptable."
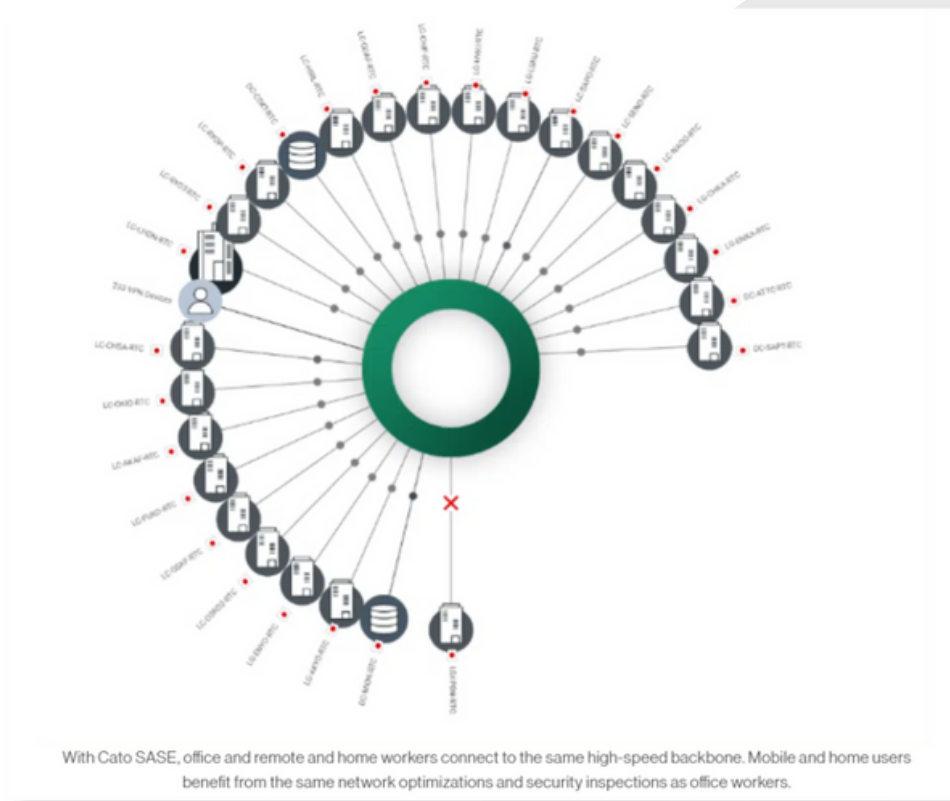
Kobasako had heard good things about Cato SASE and decided to give it a try with a proof of concept (POC) implementation. At the same time, the Covid-19 pandemic exploded, so Lion incorporated remote access into the POC as well. He was impressed with the Cato team. "We were worried at first because Cato was a new system and approach for us," says Kobasako "but the Cato team cleared up all of our concerns."

Cato connects all global enterprise network resources — including branch locations, physical and cloud datacenters, and mobile and home users — into a single secure, global, cloud-native network service. With all WAN and Internet traffic consolidated in the cloud, Cato applies a suite of robust security services to protect all traffic, including anti-malware, next generation firewall, and IPS.

Connecting a location to Cato is just a matter of installing a simple preconfigured Cato Socket appliance, which links automatically to the nearest of Cato's more than 65 globally dispersed points of presence (PoPs). At the local PoP, Cato provides an onramp to its global backbone and security services. The backbone is not only privately managed for zero packet loss and 5 9's uptime, it also has built in WAN optimization to improve throughput dramatically. Cato monitors network traffic and selects the optimum path for each packet across the Cato backbone. With Cato, mobile and home users get the same network performance and security as their office counterparts.

The results of Lion's POC with Cato were impressive. "It was clear Cato was a very good solution for us and that its management portal would help us cut management costs," says Kobasako. "The transition was very smooth. We decided that Cato would be the center of our network, which is the main component of our IT strategy moving forward."

In a matter of weeks, Lion deployed Cato to 29 of its locations and to 5,000 users who moved to working at home during the Covid-19 pandemic. It has taken full advantage of Cato's next generation anti-malware, IPS, and MDR to secure all its users.

With Cato SASE, office and remote and home workers connect to the same high-speed backbone. Mobile and home users benefit from the same network optimizations and security inspections as office workers.

Aside from excellent performance and Cato's airtight security, Lion is impressed with Cato's management portal, which centralizes network and security monitoring and management in a single console. "We really like that Cato is in the cloud so we can manage everything on the network from one place," says Kobayashi. "That is a huge advantage for us."

"We have many more security controls with Cato's SD-WAN than we had before," adds Shiina. "This year, the entire WAN and Internet connectivity will be running on Cato."

Eiichi Kobasako,
Chief of Integrated Systems, Lion Corporation