

VERTICAL:	Manufacturer
HEAD OFFICE:	Sweden
GLOBAL FOOTPRINT:	China, India, Scandinavia, Western Europe
LOCATIONS:	50
EMPLOYEES:	5,000 +

New Wave Group Quintuples Capacity, Boosts Flexibility with the Cato Cloud

About New Wave Group

Headquartered in Gothenburg, Sweden, New Wave Group designs, purchases and develops brands and products in corporate promotions, sports and leisure and gifts and home decoration. New Wave has more than 50 locations with less than 100 employees in each office, across Scandinavia and Western Europe, including Norway, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, Netherlands Germany Spain, Italy and Switzerland. It also has offices in Shanghai, Ho Chi Minh City, and Dhaka, primarily for purchasing regional textiles

The Challenge: A Global Network with Capacity and Flexibility to Support Continuous Growth

Prior to Cato, New Wave relied on MPLS to connect its European subsidiaries and one Far East location to its two corporate datacenters in Sweden and the Netherlands. Internet VPNs also connected locations to one another. For security, the company relied on centralized security appliances, so just about all traffic had to be backhauled through New Wave's two datacenter locations.

Like many organizations, New Wave struggled to afford global WAN connections with enough bandwidth to support its rapidly growing operations. "MPLS is really expensive," says David Brouwers, New Wave Group IT Infrastructure Manager, "Even though we boosted MPLS bandwidth over time from 2 Mbps to 10 Mbps and even 50 Mbps, it always felt as if we couldn't afford the bandwidth we really needed."

Beginning in 1990, the company started launching and acquiring new brands across Europe at a rapid pace. The company expects to continue doing so in the coming years. With such fast growth, network flexibility and quick ramp-up of new WAN connections became critical – a problem for MPLS.

“With MPLS, it took up to six months to connect a new office or warehouse location,” said Brouwers. “That was simply unacceptable for a growing business like ours.” Reliability was another thorny issue. “Even with a large telco and lots of backup lines, we found that our MPLS went down too often,” says Brouwers. “We tried switching MPLS providers, but the improvement was minimal.” And with MPLS’s limited bandwidth, applications underperformed with staff complaints running five or ten per week under MPLS, says Brouwers.

Last mile provider options offered by the telcos were limited, and even though they were supposedly managing their providers, New Wave found performance and reliability lacking. “When there was an outage it could take up to two days to get up and running again,” says Brouwers.

New Wave’s centralized security architecture was also problematic, as it required backhauling all the traffic through the security solutions at its two datacenters, with the inevitable performance hit.

New Wave considered SD-WAN alternatives to MPLS, including the Cato Cloud. “We talked with Cato for more than a year, but MPLS was the given with the long track record,” says Brouwers. After months of discussion and proof of concept with Cato, New Wave made the decision to go for it and started adding locations one by one to the Cato Cloud. “The difference was dramatic almost immediately,” says Brouwers.

New Wave allotted the same budget to Cato that it had been targeting to MPLS and other external lines. The result? Tons more bandwidth. “We found we could multiply the bandwidth of each site by five or more with Cato without increasing cost,” says Brouwers, “10 Mbps went to 50, 20 went to 100.”

The productivity impact was dramatic. “Staff complaints about business system performance have plummeted to two or three total in the past six months with the Cato Cloud. That’s more than 90% fewer service tickets and a lot fewer frustrated users,” says Brouwers. “We still have performance issues with our business systems but network performance has been ruled out as a factor.”

Performance has been consistently good even as average file sizes have grown. “We’re working with much larger image files today, particularly in our textile firms,” says Brouwers. “In the past, if someone uploaded a huge catalog, network performance lagged, and everyone’s productivity was

affected. Not anymore.”

Connecting new locations now takes days or hours instead of months. Still, Brouwers recommends careful planning around the last mile. Local tail lead times can still negatively impact the deliveries. “The business is moving very fast. Now with Cato we can match that speed on the network side,” says Brouwers.

Reliability issues have also been reduced, especially along the last mile. “We’ve been considering last-mile management for a while, but we haven’t moved on it because, truthfully, with Cato we’ve had so few outages.” And with Cato, if New Wave doesn’t like a last-mile provider it can just switch, which wasn’t possible with MPLS. “We also have more backup solutions in place, so the impact of an outage with one provider is not nearly as great as it once was,” says Brouwers.

While New Wave still takes advantage of the security solutions at its two datacenters, Cato has enabled it to begin to move away from security appliances, shifting anti-malware and IPS to Cato Cloud for several subsidiaries and branch offices — resulting in performance and security improvement.

New Wave plans to continue connecting new locations to the Cato Cloud and is considering adding Cato Managed Threat Detection and Response (MDR) to its security arsenal. Says Brouwers, “With Cato we increased bandwidth, improved support, and gained the flexibility to grow and experiment. The Cato Cloud just fits our business a lot better than MPLS.”

David Brouwers,
IT Infrastructure Manager