KEMIN / CATO NETWORKS CASE STUDY

Kemin Industries Replaces 60-Site Worldwide MPLS Network With Global Managed SD-WAN Services

About Kemin

Kemin Industries is a privately held, ingredient manufacturer operating in 90 countries with more than 2,500 employees worldwide. About 10 years ago, Kemin had chosen to centralise its IT and run its global operation on a single, central ERP system in the USA. MPLS connected the company's 60 branch offices and manufacturing facilities in Belgium, Brazil, China, India, Italy, Russia, Singapore, South Africa and the United States.

The Challenge: Moving away from MPLS

With the adoption of the cloud and frustrations with costs and headaches of the telco bundle, more and more global companies are turning to global secure access service edge (SASE) services as an alternative. Case in point is Kemin Industries. The ingredient manufacturer made the strategic decision to replace its 60-site MPLS network.

"Before the expiration of our WAN contract in September 2018, we evaluated if we were still on the right track with MPLS in terms of price and technology," says Nik Meeus, Worldwide IT Technical Manager at Kemin Industries. "Our provider had grown so big that the collaboration did not run as smooth as we would like in terms of administration, deployment, and support. Also, the cost of the lines was relatively high compared to the available bandwidth."

Another important factor was their fast-growing adoption of cloud solutions and applications such as Microsoft Office 365. "Most of our subsidiaries had only one single internet connection. This posed a risk in terms of application availability and continuity, so we wanted to have

redundant connections to the cloud," he says.

The company turned to a leading network-independent service provider of managed SD-WAN solutions for help. The experts recommended Cato, the first SASE solution to converges SD-WAN and network security capabilities into a global, cloud-native platform.

The Selection Process

Kemin evaluated a number of options, including their existing WAN provider and a number of SD-WAN vendors. Nik Meeus: "Through an open dialog with our consultants we came to the conclusion that the Cato Networks solution was the best fit with our environment." Kemin Industries is a very ambitious company with high growth targets.

Nik Meeus: "Last year we built a completely new site in Russia and next year a new site in South Africa will go live. Several acquisitions will fuel further growth in the future. One of the foundations under our growth strategy is digitization and the flexibility of our SD-WAN solution must help us integrate and scale faster."

The SD-WAN implementation

Kemin first ran a proof of concept to test the Cato solution in the Kemin infrastructure. Nik Meeus: "Some applications are just very sensitive to latency and we operate around the globe. Therefore we decide to run the PoC in Belgium as well as in two of our most difficult sites: China and Brazil." The results of the PoC were positive and soon after that the global rollout started.

On December 1st, 2018 Kemin had fully replaced their MPLS based WAN with the new Cato Networks SD-WAN solution. Cato Networks SD-WAN benefits With the Cato solution, Kemin now is able to use standard internet connections to connect to the private Cato network. Cato's global cloud backbone and local Points of Presence around the world ensure a performance that is at least equal to the phased out MPLS connections. Because of the lower cost of the lines, Kemin could also use double internet connections on all locations at the same price level as before. As a result, both the connections to the cloud and to the Kemin datacenter are now fully redundant.

Nik Meeus: "The Cato Networks solutions has proved to be the perfect match for our environment and needs. One of the objectives we have achieved, was to have a cost neutral transition from MPLS to SD-WAN, At the same time we made big progress in terms of flexibility and capacity. A good example of Cato's benefits is the improved situation in China.

Due to the Chinese firewall, our colleagues sometimes didn't have access to their email and Skype for hours. Today our Office 365 data travels via the local Chinese PoP over the global Cato cloud backbone, which solved that issue instantly."

Of course there were some issues during the Proof of Concept phase, but that's just normal. Because all issues were resolved during the PoC, the actual roll-out went amazingly fast. Within two months our SD-WAN was up and running. That speed is a result of the way the Cato solution is built, and the proactive way the project was managed.

Nik Meeus,
Worldwide IT Technical Manager, Kemin Industries