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CATO NETWORKS **CASE STUDY**

VERTICAL:	Manufacturing
HEAD OFFICE:	Switzerland
GLOBAL FOOTPRINT:	Europe, North & South America, Asia, Africa
COUNTRIES:	35
LOCATIONS:	100+
GLOBAL USERS:	2,500

Komax Drives Innovation, Cloud Connectivity, and Mobile Collaboration with Cato

About Komax

Based in Switzerland, with production facilities in Europe, North and South America, Asia, and Africa, Komax is a pioneer and market leader in automated wire processing, with innovative solutions for any situation requiring precise contact connections. Komax's solutions are most prominent in automotive, aerospace, telecom, and industrial markets. Before Cato, Komax first connected 35 locations with MPLS. Nine years ago, Komax replaced MPLS with SD-WAN using on-premises SD-WAN appliances at each location.

The Challenge: Agile Cloud and Mobile Connections

Innovative companies need innovative IT solutions to help them collaborate and bring new products to market fast. These include fast, agile connectivity to cloud services and a collaborative mobile workforce. Rigid legacy WAN solutions such as MPLS cannot offer the network flexibility and speed that are vital to innovative success. Komax, a world market leader and innovator in wire processing solutions¬—everything from wire strippers to complex harnesses for automobile electronic wiring systems—knew this all too well.

"We are the market and innovation leader in our industry," says Tobias Rölz, Executive Vice President, Market and Digital Services for Komax. When Komax started a major digital transformation three years ago, Rölz knew the company would have to transform IT. "We analyzed our systems and data and started moving into the cloud, introducing Office 365 for collaboration, Salesforce for CRM, and cloud-based SAP for ERP."

Komax had transitioned from MPLS to SD-WAN six years before that. Unfortunately, the appliance-based SD-WAN solution it deployed as an alternative proved too complex and rigid.

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"Strategic fit was important," says Rölz. "We wanted a solution from a company thinking one or two steps ahead of the others that would reduce the operational costs of our network. IT value should come from offering services that improve the quality and productivity of our company, not operating a server or network appliance."

Komax Investigates SASE, Chooses Cato

Komax had heard about Cato through Gartner. "Cato Networks was one of the first vendors identified in Gartner's SASE research," says Sullberger. The team looked into Cato and liked what they found. "We were impressed by Cato's thinking. They were really thinking one or two steps ahead of others," says Rölz, "Cato was moving the network and security into the cloud, which completely fits our vision for more or less a serverless office in a few years from now."

Cato connects all global enterprise network resources — including branch locations, mobile users, and physical and cloud datacenters — 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 60 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 dramatically improve throughput. Cato monitors network traffic and selects the optimum path for each packet across the Cato backbone. Mobile users run across the same backbone, benefiting from the same optimization features and improving remote access performance.

Rölz and Sollberger found moving away from installing and managing SD-WAN appliances very appealing. "We liked that all the interconnected PoPs in the Cato cloud meant we could stop depending on our local on-premises SD-WAN equipment," says Sollberger. COVID-19 hit just as Komax started rolling out Cato to its 35 locations. "Cato reacted very quickly," says Rölz.

"That rollout demonstrated the agility and flexibility Cato and its cloud connectivity and security would give us."Komax also rolled out Cato to the 35 locations that formerly held all that complex SD-WAN equipment. "Even in locations where we had no IT at all, the general manager was able to install the Cato socket quickly and have the network up and running in minutes," says Rölz. "Cato's first and second level support is great at helping internal customers directly," adds Sollberger.

Agility, Performance, Security, Cost

The result was reduced operational costs and improved agility, flexibility, performance, and security. "When you move into the cloud you need to be agile and flexible," says Rölz. "Moving security and intelligence to the cloud gave us that agility and helped us reduce our operational costs significantly. Operations are handled by the Cato very smoothly."

Security was another benefit. As Komax moved its employees to their home offices, it saw a significant increase in attacks. "We can see that Cato has been reacting very strongly to protect our network," says Rölz. Cato's support has also been a relief. "Cato is able to support our issues in all our locations 24 hours a day," says Sollberger, "This lets us focus on more important goals, such as helping our customers achieve better quality and operations."

Setting up new sites on Cato is quick and easy.

"With Cato, we can even address traffic in the specific country where the cloud solution sits," says Sollberger, "and it's easy to increase capacity bandwidth in each site to scale. This helps us improve performance and response times and makes the cloud service much better to use."

Rölz feels that Cato is very in tune to Komax's needs. "They really listen to us, consider our needs, and adapt to them. It's a real partnership."

Daniel Sollberger,
Lead, Global Based IT Infrastructure

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