CASE STUDY

From traditional WAN to global network in the Cloud

IP knowledge

Low& Bonar
Progress through performance

Customer Name
Low & Bonar

Business activities
Producer of advanced, high-quality materials from yarn and fiber based on polymer.

Organizations are constantly on the move. But to be agile, having a flexible network infrastructure is crucial. This certainly applies to organizations such as Low & Bonar, who have international offices and do business all over the world. Mergers and acquisitions have completely changed the business environment within a few years and have created challenges in the areas of costs, management and digital performance.

About Low & Bonar

Low and Bonar (L&B) is a world leader in high-performance materials in a variety of industrial and civil engineering applications with factories in America, Europe, the Middle-East and China. They produce advanced, high-quality materials from polymer-based yarns and fibers. The proprietary technologies they use to weave and create, leads to products with exceptional strength and versatility.

L&B offers unique solutions for a wide range of markets, in applications that affect and improve our entire lives. They help customers deliver their own products and projects faster, easier, more economically and with greater sustainability so that a better and more sustainable world is created. Low & Bonar has been part of the German Freudenberg group since 12 May 2020.

International WAN Challenges

Was it wise to continue the relationship with the telecom company, who were chosen in 2013? With this question, the preparation of a quotation request to several suppliers started in 2018. One thing was certain, namely that the world of international infrastructures had completely changed. It had to be done better, faster and above all cheaper. Due to acquisitions from the past, the L&B IT infrastructure contained a relatively large number of different systems and applications, which resulted in a high management burden. Low & Bonar uses, amongst other things, an Oracle (JD Edwards) ERP system that is hosted on centralized servers in Arnhem. The Intex ERP system is also used for specific business processes (weaving industry).

SAP ERP is also used. Other important business applications are also hosted in the central data center in Arnhem.

In addition, its own IT department was too dependent on the current supplier. *"Creating new locations or change requests did not always go smoothly"*, is how Paul Visscher, Head of Infrastructure and Security at Low & Bonar, puts it. The performance of the international network was also very different between the countries. For example, in China, the data first passes through a firewall controlled by the Chinese state.

A dedicated bandwidth was needed here anyway, but later it turned out there was an even better alternative.

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Making choices for the right solution

It soon became clear that this time it was not about simply renewing the MPLS network of the telecom provider. Partly due to the new possibilities of SD-WAN technology, there suddenly appeared to be many options. MPLS, Internet and even wireless (4G) connections in combination with various SD-WAN technologies.

For Paul Visscher there was something else that was important, namely the 'co-managed' model offered by IPknowledge. As a result, the control and direction of the WAN came primarily by himself and, without management costs. *"As a result, I literally have flexibility and scalability in control, which is better for us than a fully managed environment of a traditional CSP, Communication Service Provider or Telco"*, he explains.

The solution provided

IPknowledge offered two alternatives in terms of technology. First of all, a 'standard' edge SD-WAN solution, Riverbed Steelconnect. This offers data transport over mainly the public Internet supplemented with dedicated capacity (point-point connections) for intercontinental data transport.

The second alternative was the solution of CATO Networks in combination with internet lines, whereby dedicated capacity is not required because the CATO service includes the use of a worldwide backbone. The latter solution was chosen, because with CATO even the firewalls and remote VPN access solutions can be replaced in the long term. In addition, a higher performance in China could be guaranteed over the CATO network. Finally, Paul appreciates that existing internet lines, which are still under contract, can be used for the necessary redundancy. This flexibility did not appear to exist at other parties and would have to be reinvested.

"We chose IPknowledge because they could offer more at a reduced price, but mainly because of their excellent service, greater flexibility and scalability. A small organization with great global achievements"

Paul Visscher, Head of Infrastructure and Security

An unexpected user benefit of the CATO solution

Due to the global corona outbreak, access to all ERP systems appeared to be a challenge at first because the international network was burdened in a different way.

"Employees now click on a CATO icon that appears on the desktop and everything works with one click", says Paul. Within seconds, his colleagues could access all applications and continue to work from their home workplace.

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Paul was able to arrange the extra necessary VPN licenses himself, without technical support. If first-line support is required, Low & Bonar can contact the Digital Performance Center (DPC) of IPknowledge in Amsterdam 24/7, which continuously monitors the international network and keeps it safe.

10 Results and evaluation

- Approximately 30% savings compared to the traditional international WAN environment.
- A great deal of convenience, flexibility and control. You can make changes yourself, such as adding branches or Policies (business rules).
- Worldwide performance of ERP and other applications, such as video conference.
- No more dependence on Telcos.
- Existing investments in internet lines can be retained (For redundancy)
- Migrate step-by-step. It is a platform that can be connected too after the expiry of other contracts.
- Visibility and monitoring of the total international network structure.
- Improvement of digital security, because, all international data connections run through a global Cloud platform.
- A good English speaking helpdesk.
- Collaboration on the basis of knowledge exchange between mutual IT managers.

Acknowledgment

On behalf of IPknowledge, we would like to thank Paul Visscher for explaining this practical case from both technology and the user.

IPknowledge connects people across organizations, around the world and to every application. We provide cloud-native connectivity, security and monitoring services that are powerful, agile and simple. Our Network-as-a-Service approach allows our clients to benefit from secure digital performance while eliminating networking equipment and related operations worldwide.

www.ipknowledge.net