

CASE STUDY

SECTOR

Packaging Manufacturing

SERVICE

Managed SD-WAN

Dedicated Internet Access

Broadband Internet

MPLS

Managed Secure Access

Managed Hosting

Managed Security Services

Professional Services

ELOPAK +GTT

ACCELERATING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION





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STEPHEN AITKEN

CORPORATE IT INFRASTRUCTURE ARCHITECT AT ELOPAK

ELOPAK SIMPLIFIES ITS GLOBAL NETWORK WITH GTT MANAGED SD-WAN AND SECURITY SERVICES



Elopak is a leading global supplier of carton packaging and filling equipment that places sustainability at the core of its organization.

Its operations and associates serve customers in 70 countries around the world. Using GTT's Managed SD-WAN and security services across its global network, the manufacturer has simplified its enterprise architecture and improved network performance, resilience, security and agility for its sites and remote workers.

Elopak manufactures innovative CarbonNeutral® packaging solutions for milk, juice and other liquid products, including its iconic Pure-Pak® cartons. Over the past decade, the company has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 70% and continues to apply market-leading technology, skills and natural materials sourcing to produce more than 14 billion cartons a year.

Working closely with its customers to ensure the safe packaging of their liquid products, Elopak designs, installs and maintains complete filling equipment solutions at customer plants.

A frontrunner in connected manufacturing and predictive maintenance practices, the manufacturer depends on constant and reliable data transmission between its people and business critical applications.

Its ERP system keeps track of orders between its production plants and its corporate, sales and associate sites located on five continents. Likewise, the quality control systems in place at each plant must be

connected to ensure continuous, safe production.

Elopak filling machines also connect back to its central systems for software updates and sharing maintenance requirement data, as do Elopak's field service engineers, who access machine schematics and maintenance analytics when out servicing equipment.



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THE CHALLENGE

A simpler and more cost-efficient way

Elopak is a long-standing GTT customer, having for many years run an MPLS-based WAN to connect its sites. However, to support its fast-growing business and evolving cloud-centric operating model, including a move from Skype for Business to Microsoft 365 and Teams, Elopak needed a simpler and more cost-efficient way to manage the growing need for internet access at many of its sites around the world.

Stephen Aitken, Corporate IT Infrastructure Architect at Elopak, is responsible for the company's global network team. He explains, “Our core network uses

MPLS-grade communication, which is vital for many of our services.

It allows you to use QoS to reserve bandwidth for critical applications. However, when you start to have a lot of traffic to cloud services and the Internet, sending all of it across your MPLS network can create an unnecessary overhead. Our roadmap helped us pinpoint SD-WAN as the right technology to support our cloud journey.

We went through an RFI process to find out whether we should implement SD-WAN ourselves, work with a new vendor or continue with our existing provider, GTT.”

THE SOLUTION

Managed SD-WAN overlay

Working with GTT, Elopak was able to deploy a resilient, yet simplified global network to connect its sites and employees securely.

GTT delivered Managed SD-WAN as an overlay for Elopak's existing MPLS-based WAN expanding and integrating its internet connectivity into a single, hybrid WAN. The service covers approximately 30 sites, across the Nordics, mainland Europe, Israel, Canada and the US.

Each site uses MPLS as primary lines, complemented by dedicated internet or broadband as backup, in an active-active configuration. The internet lines are also used for local breakout at each site, which can leverage GTT's Tier 1 internet backbone to optimize traffic to the major cloud providers that peer with GTT. To meet the increased requirement for remote working at the start of the pandemic, GTT worked with Elopak to quickly increase the network capacity needed to ensure its managed secure access service could support the sudden spike in remote-user numbers.

Excellent implementation

Aitken shares, "We chose GTT due to the strength of its technical solution and its cost effectiveness. Our Managed SD-WAN implementation with GTT was excellent. During the start of the pandemic, the biggest headache was to work out how we should secure our users quickly. GTT was proactive and worked hand in hand with us to design a solution. The GTT team — including the project manager, service manager, sales engineer and account director — were all very customer oriented and helped keep the project on track throughout."

Supported governance model

Elopak applies a strict phase-gate process for any new technology deployments. An internal committee reviews a given solution before implementation and ensures accountability for the deliverables. "The GTT team was extremely good at supporting our governance model, by providing the documentation we needed in a timely way," Aitken explains. "GTT worked with us to facilitate the design, moved swiftly through the pilot, figured out any issues and fixed them as required for our phase-gate process approval.

Our operational risk was kept low because GTT provided internet gateways on its network so we were able to pilot just a few sites, whilst keeping our MPLS WAN running too. If something wasn't right, we could simply roll it back and try again. Everything was really flexible, well managed and executed by GTT."





“GTT really proved the strength of its network and the SD-WAN technology when the pandemic hit. The team worked with us to quickly ramp up our capacity to get our thousands of employees up and running securely, and with the bandwidth to handle the change.

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THE BENEFITS

A network that's simple to manage

By deploying GTT Managed SD-WAN, Elopak has been able to reduce the number of network-related devices at each of its sites, easing day-to-day management for the network team. Aitken explains, “Our GTT Managed SD-WAN service has helped us remove a lot of complexity. A big change is that caching is built into the SD-WAN box, so we’ve been able to remove the caching devices and systems we had at each site previously. This means we no longer have to administrate and provide support for so many different devices.”

With GTT Managed SD-WAN, all networks are managed via a central orchestrator accessed through the GTT EtherVision portal. This gives Elopak improved control and visibility of its entire enterprise network. “With our SD-WAN orchestrator, we can now see everything across the network in real time,” Aitken says. “We can see all devices and traffic traversing the different lines we have, which helps with identifying any issues quickly. We’ve also designed business overlays that decide which data isn’t so important or ping-sensitive, which help us easily optimize our usage and capacity accordingly from within the portal.”

Cost-optimized bandwidth with no idle backup circuits

Elopak has moved away from using a primary circuit with an idle secondary “backup” circuit, only utilized when the main circuit goes down. Today, the manufacturer enjoys the cost and performance benefits of being able to use all lines and manage traffic more appropriately according to its destination.

“We worked with GTT to consolidate our lines,” Aitken explains. “With an all-MPLS WAN, the backup lines are sized to take the load, but you may never use them. Now that we’ve implemented business-grade internet from GTT as the backup instead, we can use both the MPLS and internet lines simultaneously. So, we gained

usable capacity as well as saved money by right-sizing our MPLS bandwidth and using the internet lines to break out the internet-bound traffic.”

Improved network performance for the cloud

Bringing all of Elopak’s connectivity into one Managed SD-WAN environment has brought down the number of network incidents and length of response times significantly.

“Changing to SD-WAN helped us and GTT reduce the frequency and impact of network outages,” says Aitken. “Our new network offers a great user experience thanks to the cloud-centric and active-active setup we’ve put in place with GTT, and the ticket volume our team receives has dropped by about 80%. When we do have an incident, it’s much quicker for us to work out what the problem is and get it fixed. The huge added benefit is that our team can now focus on new and exciting projects that enable our business, such as those involving machine learning or AI and predictive maintenance.”

Increased agility for changing business needs

Its new services from GTT have helped Elopak take its network agility to new heights. The bandwidth on each SD-WAN device can be upscaled quickly using any available access types, reducing the need for long installation wait times. Locations can be rapidly deployed or decommissioned on Elopak’s network.

“Let’s say you have a project at a site that will last six months,” Aitken explains. “With SD-WAN, you can quickly boost your capacity for the duration and make sure you have enough capacity for everyone. We can work with GTT to get connectivity or bring our own should we want to. GTT really proved the strength of its network and the SD-WAN technology to us when the pandemic hit, where the team worked with us to quickly ramp up our capacity so we could get our thousands of employees up and running securely and with the bandwidth to handle the change.”

THE CONNECTED FUTURE

Looking ahead, Elopak is set to continue its cloud journey using a secure, resilient and agile network that can adapt quickly to an ever-changing business environment.

“Our SD-WAN, connectivity and security services from GTT help us manage our growing cloud usage and enable quick execution of any changes we need to support our business, such as bringing in new SaaS services or spinning up new sites anywhere in the world,” Aitken observes. “Working with GTT, we know we can support a flexible and hybrid work environment wherever we go.”

ABOUT GTT

GTT is a managed network and security services provider to global organizations. We design and deliver solutions that leverage advanced cloud, networking and security technologies.

We complement our solutions with a suite of professional services and exceptional support teams in local markets around the world. We serve thousands of national and multinational companies with a portfolio that includes SD-WAN, security, Internet, voice and other connectivity options. Our services are uniquely enabled by our top-ranked, global, Tier 1 IP backbone, which spans more than 260 cities on six continents.

The company culture is built on a customer-first service experience reinforced by our commitment to operational excellence and continuous improvement in our business, environmental, social and governance practices.



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