

CASE STUDY

SECTOR

Manufacturing

SERVICE

SD-WAN

DIA

MPLS

Secure Remote Access

SIP Trunking

MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC UK

+ GTT

ACCELERATING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION





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IAIN BLAZEY HEAD OF IT, MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC UK

MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC UK BOOSTS BUSINESS AGILITY WITH GTT SD-WAN AND SECURITY SERVICES

Mitsubishi Electric UK provides innovative electronic products across a range of markets, including heating, cooling, automation, lifts and automotive. Using GTT's network and security services, the manufacturer's IT team can act quickly and with confidence to support the organization in realizing new opportunities or securely managing sudden changes in its operating environment.

Mitsubishi Electric manufactures, markets and sells reliable, high-quality electronic equipment. Working with GTT in the UK, the organization has implemented Managed SD-WAN, Secure Remote Access and SIP Trunking to increase its business agility. At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the services from GTT proved their flexibility by enabling Mitsubishi Electric UK to navigate unexpected changes quickly and securely. Today, over 700 UK employees, based across the UK and Ireland, can work securely from anywhere, and new business locations can join the corporate network faster than ever before.

The UK division of global manufacturer Mitsubishi Electric was established more than 50 years ago, and is the oldest of the corporation's 14 European branches. Its key values of innovation and efficiency, which benefit the environment, have helped the brand establish itself in the UK. From its 15 sites across the UK and Ireland, the organization manages sales and support for customers, installers and partners, manufactures air conditioning products and performs R&D, as well as operating warehouses and associated logistics.

The IT team based in Hatfield supports Mitsubishi Electric's business in the UK and Ireland, as well as

working alongside counterparts in other branches to deliver Europe-wide projects. As a pioneering organization, it takes an agile approach to evolving its digital estate.

With security and reliability crucial to the successful running of its business, the manufacturer's technology stack is based on proven elements, but its digital strategy also leaves ample room for trialing and investing in new technologies in pursuit of a competitive edge.

THE CHALLENGE

As Mitsubishi Electric branches across Europe have adopted new technologies, such as cloud computing, they've worked to optimize and standardize across the board.

Iain Blazey has worked for Mitsubishi Electric UK for more than 35 years, and has been Head of IT since 2013. His highly experienced team is key to running the branch's business-critical systems, as well as evolving its digital infrastructure and meeting user support requirements.

“For the past decade, we've been harmonizing the technology we implement for Mitsubishi Electric within the UK and Ireland and across Europe,” says Blazey. “Historically, each country has operated to its own standards. However, the more we can use the same systems as a group, the better we can manage new technology rollouts at scale and leverage larger user numbers and efficiencies to bring down costs.”

For the UK, the branch's existing MPLS WAN was under strain as user traffic destined for the internet or public cloud increased. All traffic was routed through centralized internet breakout points, causing increased latency and single points of failure. In addition, the organization had used IP telephony internally for some time, but still used ISDN for external calls. With this legacy technology due to be phased out in the UK by 2025, a new solution was required.

The team set out to upgrade the existing UK data and communications network to improve its performance in a way that would still integrate seamlessly with the European and Global network topologies. They also sought to find a solution that would enable faster responses to changing business requirements, such as managing fluctuating bandwidth usage at the 15 sites, securely introducing the latest interesting SaaS applications, and connecting new business premises.

As Blazey observes, "Data is becoming heavier, businesses are more reliant on it, and people expect to

receive and process it faster using a multitude of cloud-based tools. We needed infrastructure in place that was up to managing our business data much more in line with those expectations."

In early 2020, the requirements for securing users across their network also took a sudden turn.

"We were working to finalize our network upgrade when the global COVID-19 pandemic hit and we needed to shift to remote working as quickly as possible," Blazey explains. "As a group across Europe, we had around 1,000 VPN licenses, but with around 3,500 employees combined, they were rapidly used up. We needed a secure solution to connect our 700+ UK and Ireland workers – fast."

GTT's cloud networking services offered the security, improved network visibility, increased control and enhanced network reliability to support the organization's requirements.



"GTT's flexibility and strength as an access-agnostic provider focused on getting our services up and running as fast as possible.

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THE SOLUTION

Today, GTT provides a resilient, flexible and secure network service, connecting Mitsubishi Electric's offices, warehouses and remote workers in the UK and Ireland with the applications and systems they depend on.

GTT's Managed SD-WAN service has been implemented as an overlay to Mitsubishi Electric UK's hybrid MPLS and DIA networks, allowing the organization to keep established network links to trusted endpoints in place. Each of the 15 sites has dual circuits for added resiliency. These connect through uCPEs, which allow for service-chaining VNFs by

hosting both the SD-WAN endpoints as well as next-generation firewalls that secure local internet breakout access. All connectivity and policies are managed via a central orchestrator accessed through the GTT EtherVision customer portal, and routing decisions can be tailored for specific applications.

GTT also provides Secure Remote Access, which allows the organization's users to reach corporate resources securely when working remotely. User-access authentication support, such as multi-factor authentication, helps to mitigate the risks of an increased online network security perimeter.



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THE RESULTS

Increased Efficiency and Agility to Support Business Changes

GTT’s Managed SD-WAN offers better visibility across the range of applications used by Mitsubishi Electric UK. The IT team combines this insight with the tools provided in GTT’s customer portal to better control how bandwidth is prioritized, which helps them manage the network more efficiently.

“Given the huge changes in how all of us have had to work following the global pandemic, moving to SD-WAN with GTT was one of the best infrastructure decisions we’ve ever made,” says Iain Blaze. “As a business, our ability to make quick decisions relies on data moving freely between our users, systems and the cloud. At peak times such as the end of a quarter, the load on our network could really strain it. Today, with GTT SD-WAN, our general data throughput is much better than it was before, and the business has noted the improved network performance. It’s fantastic how we’ve continued to successfully support our business, and we wouldn’t have been able to do it without the flexibility GTT’s services afford us.”

The pandemic presented the team with some unique challenges, due to the delays it caused for anything requiring on-site presence. When the business wanted to open new premises or relocate, Blaze and his team were able to rise to the challenge quickly due to the high levels of automation and flexibility afforded by GTT Managed SD-WAN.

Blaze shares, “While the UK was in lockdown due to the pandemic, we were asked to help facilitate both the opening of a new warehouse in Yorkshire as well as moving an office location in central London. Without our SD-WAN service from GTT in place, connecting up those sites could have taken as much as three months because of wait times for local fixed cable access installation from third-party providers, followed by the time it would take to install and configure our kit on-site. Our sites were live and configured through the GTT EtherVision portal within a day, really proving the benefits of SD-WAN and also GTT’s flexibility and strength as an access-agnostic provider focused on getting our services up and running as fast as possible.”



A Network Fit for a Hybrid Workforce in the Cloud

Mitsubishi Electric UK's cloud strategy currently has Microsoft Office 365 implementation as a key focus. For traffic on the corporate network, the organization is able to leverage GTT's Tier 1 internet backbone for optimized data transfer across the internet, as well as to Microsoft and other leading cloud providers that the backbone is directly peered with. The combination of more cloud adoption and a proliferation of end user devices outside the corporate network make it ever more important to implement the right security measures. For remote workers, Mitsubishi Electric UK worked with GTT to manage traffic at the user level to both secure the user experience and lessen the load on the corporate network.

When the pandemic hit, GTT proactively supported us and was able to deploy secure remote access through our network quickly to over 600 users," Blazey shared. "We couldn't believe how fast the turnaround was! With everyone working from home, we also needed to be smarter about bandwidth utilization, so our central network wasn't swamped. We worked with GTT to split internet directed traffic straight from the individual user's laptop, which hugely reduced the load on our central pipes, and also ensured a much better experience for our users."

Looking ahead, Blazey feels well-prepared for the hybrid workforce of the future. "Many of our colleagues work in customer experience and sales where it's all about being available when our customers want to reach out. Having secure remote working in place at scale means we can offer much more flexible working

conditions to the benefit of our employees and our business."

Partnering for Proven Best Practice

GTT supported Mitsubishi Electric UK with the transition from MPLS WAN to SD-WAN. GTT delivers a managed service, which includes equipment, access sourcing, implementation and ongoing maintenance and management.

"Throughout our transition, it was great to be able to leverage GTT's expertise from many previous implementations to help make ours a success," Blazey comments. "GTT always gives us helpful input and support when we need it. If we have a problem, our awesome account team will help us determine a fix immediately, and then work with us to improve it iteratively as required over time. We appreciate GTT's willingness to provide us with advice and to share its experience."

Following the successful implementation, other Mitsubishi Electric divisions are looking to the branch for inspiration on how to develop their own networks.

Blazey noted, "As our networks across the group become more software-defined and agile, I'm also looking forward to simpler IT implementations. We'll be able to work out how to implement a new solution or technology in a trial or proof-of-concept exercise once, and then roll a successful result out the same way across all our estate – knowing it will encounter the same setups and behave in the expected way everywhere."

THE CONNECTED FUTURE

As an innovative organization, Mitsubishi Electric UK has many exciting plans in the works. For voice services, the team plans to take PBXs previously hosted in each branch office and replace them with flexible and interoperable SIP trunking from GTT. This integrates smoothly with GTT's Managed SD-WAN service, and can include local telephone numbers for Mitsubishi's users. Furthermore, the team is looking to bring the benefits of Microsoft Teams to bear for its call center teams, improve secure communications with suppliers and enable virtual or augmented reality for better customer service.

Blazey concludes, "GTT is a customer-centric organization with a lot of resources and capabilities, and we benefit from having a long-term relationship. Whether it's leveraging their expertise in what they've done time and time again or working together in partnership to solve our challenges for tomorrow, GTT continues to provide us with thoughtful input and responses that prove useful over time."

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.



GTT Making
Exceptional
Possible

For more information
Americas +1 512 592 4858
EMEA +44 020 7489 7200
APAC +852 8107 1088
www.gtt.net