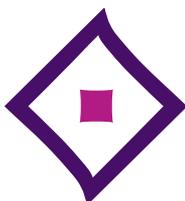**CASE STUDY**

UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES

SERVICES

CREATING A PLATFORM FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, CULTURAL CHANGE AND NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

الغرير
Al Ghurair

Consolidate network architecture, security and management across a diversified trading group comprising 25 businesses.

Founded in 1960 in Dubai, Al Ghurair Investment has developed into a major diversified business group with operations spanning more than 20 countries across the globe and employing approximately 28,000 people. From the country's prestigious skyline to its power infrastructure network, to pioneering real estate solutions, to supplying quality food staples such as flour and grains, Al Ghurair Investment is woven into the very fabric of the UAE.

"The Al Ghurair family name is synonymous with the development of the region itself. Like the UAE, Al Ghurair Investment has constantly evolved, embracing new ways of doing things in the pursuit of excellence. Our digital transformation is the next exciting part of our development, as we turn to technology to become a more data-driven, efficient and agile business," says Marinda Sheahan, Group Vice President - IT, Al Ghurair Investment.

SETTING AMBITIOUS NEW BUSINESS TARGETS

Al Ghurair Investment has set itself ambitious targets, with 25% of revenues to be generated by new business streams by 2025. Digital transformation and a smarter, more agile landscape will be key enablers in accelerating such opportunities.

As a 60-year-old legacy business with a rapid growth trajectory and a highly diversified structure, network management has historically been managed at operational business level, with each unit embedding their own IT solutions.

"Due to the diversified nature of the business, IT infrastructures have historically been built in-business – with teams embedding individual solutions," says Aamir Hussain, Net-

REQUIREMENTS
- Establish group-wide network consistency for 25 separate businesses
- Enable the industry-changing innovation promised with 5G, IoT and smart building technologies
- Simplify network management and strengthen security

SOLUTION
- Aruba Wi-Fi 6 Access Points
- Aruba CX Switch Series
- Aruba Central for cloud-based network management
- Aruba ClearPass for network access control

OUTCOMES
- Reduces network costs through standardisation and consolidation
- Provides scalable secure network template for consistent deployment and user experience
- Cuts Wi-Fi deployment times from days to hours and enables Zero Touch deployments across international operations
- Enables consistent wireless-first workplace, with bandwidth to support critical business applications
- Delivers resilient, future-ready infrastructure to accelerate digital transformation

work and Data Manager, Al Ghurair Investment. "Now, as Al Ghurair Investment looks to the next phase of development, striving to become 'One AGI', we do so with an increasingly centralised approach – and our digital ecosystem and network architecture is a critical part of that."

With digital transformation a priority in each of Al Ghurair Investment's business units, the group needed to establish a singular network approach. The company wanted central oversight, tighter integration between business units and the means to graft new applications on to the network.

"We need a network platform to support the industry-changing innovation promised with 5G, IoT and smart building technology," says Sheahan.

> " We remain a huge business with a vast array of products and talents. The Aruba network provides the thing that large businesses crave the most: agility. "

MARINDA SHEAHAN
Group Vice President of IT, Al Ghurair Investment

PURSUING A CLOUD-FIRST STRATEGY

The cloud-native and service-oriented Aruba Edge Services Platform (ESP) was fully aligned with the company's vision for its digital future and unique requirements.

"We've been partnering with Hewlett Packard Enterprise for years, with HPE storage and servers," says Hussain. "Given the strategic importance of this project, a conversation with Aruba was inevitable but we also looked closely at Gartner comparisons. Aruba Central reflected our broader cloud strategy and our desire for a cloud-based solution."

Aruba Central enables the unified management of wired and wireless infrastructure and delivers AI-powered insights, workflow automation and robust security, all as subscribed services. It enables Hussain's team to manage and optimise campus, branch, remote, data centre and IoT networks from a single dashboard, consolidating the many varied parts of the AGI business.

"It gives us visibility, speed of deployment and control," says Hussain.

BRINGING NETWORK CONSISTENCY TO A DIVERSE GROUP OF BUSINESSES

The engagement establishes consistency across Al Ghurair Investment's network architecture. It also brings network infrastructure in line with other shared services across the group.

"It has made my life considerably easier," says Hussain. "Aruba Central means I can now manage 75 branches from one pane of glass."

The project has strengthened data security. Aruba ClearPass ensures consistent policy-based governance in terms of the types of users and devices that can access each part of the network and gives visibility of network activity. ClearPass is fully integrated with the organisation's Palo Alto Networks firewall for an end-to-end orchestration of endpoint protection.

As the group harvests data from an increasing number of touchpoints, data analysis will be critical to finding new operational efficiencies and informing new services.

"We have all the security we need in place, from endpoint to cloud," says Hussain. "All our perimeters are secured with the flexibility of appropriate role-based and context-oriented policies."

ENABLING SEAMLESS MOBILITY ACROSS ALL OFFICES

The network now hosts 3,500 office users using Microsoft Teams and the plan is to roll out to Al Ghurair Investment's warehouses, factories and production sites. It will also be adopted by the company's international offices, outside of the Middle East region.

The Aruba approach establishes consistent network templates for all types of new sites. Zero Touch Provisioning of Aruba switches and wireless access points means there is no need to send trained technicians to sites and accelerate deployment times. New sites can be online within a day.

"Plus, we have clear policies in place for any new acquisitions or partnerships, which make integration and enablement of new business processes far simpler," says Hussain.

It means there is now seamless mobility across all Al Ghurair Investment offices. Employees can work from any office with the network automatically recognising and authenticating them. This improves the ability of teams from different group businesses to meet and collaborate.

DELIVERING A HIGH-PERFORMANCE APPLICATION EXPERIENCE

Mobility is only relevant if the user experience remains effective. Hussain says the strength of the Aruba network means the company's workplaces have become wireless-first and he has the bandwidth figures from each site. In conjunction, a hardware refresh means most staff now work from laptops.

"Teams are accessing an increasing range of cloud applications via the wireless network. We're running video calls wirelessly and the construction design teams are using heavy CAD applications off the Wi-Fi," Hussain adds. "The freedom to access your applications and to work from any office can only help the group."

In addition, the network upgrade now allows Al Ghurair Investment to integrate CCTV, building management, access control and parking systems across its facilities. "We can support today's functionality and we have a platform to easily integrate tomorrow's new ideas," says Hussain.

PRESENTING GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES IN NEW MARKETS

Ultimately, the Aruba ESP architecture is a key enabler of Al Ghurair Investment's 2025 strategy. Marinda Sheahan says workplace flexibility and access to the latest productivity apps reinforce the organisation as a modern, progressive employer.

"It is a business that can attract the best talent in the Middle East and where individuals can build exciting careers," she says. "Resources that were previously managing or troubleshooting network infrastructure across the different business units can now be deployed in more strategic ventures. Our network modernisation is a key enabler of our strategic objectives and provides several benefits. New business will be faster to onboard and thus faster to deliver value; a central control point enables IT to provide a better service to the business and, of course, security is integral to everything we do.

"Digital transformation is very much about an organisation-wide culture change. We are a purpose-led organisation – driven to enhance life. We have a number of transformation programmes to support our vision including the Fit for Future Leadership programme, a dedicated function to focus on enhancing customer journeys and employee experience and a group-wide ERP modernisation program as well as a culture change programme to embed innovation as part of our DNA. We are a global, diversified business group with a vast array of products and services. The Aruba network provides the very thing that large businesses crave the most: agility."

Contact Us

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a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company