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CASE STUDY

UNITED KINGDOM

MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

IMPROVING WAN EFFICIENCY FROM DATA CENTER TO CLOUD, ELEVATING QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE

THE VITEC GROUP

Consolidate and simplify the WAN edge to improve network uptime and efficiency, and support more productive global collaboration with a higher quality of end-user experience.

Following years of growth, fueled by acquisitions, Vitec's MPLS-based wide-area network (WAN) had become complex. In addition, while failover to backup circuits was automated, the process was cumbersome and end users could still lose their connection to sensitive applications such as voice and Citrix.

Ben Skinner, Vitec's Head of Corporate Networks and Infrastructure, wanted to simplify the WAN edge to improve network uptime and efficiency. He found the solution with a business-driven SD-WAN from Silver Peak, acquired by Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company. "The key thing was the simplicity of the Aruba SD-WAN platform," Skinner says.

SIMPLIFYING THE WAN EDGE WITH ARUBA EDGECONNECT

With a background in networking, Skinner knew about SD-WAN and extensively researched potential vendors, including Aryaka, Cisco Meraki, Oracle Talari, and Silver Peak (now Aruba). He and his team then methodically narrowed down the contenders to Talari and the Aruba EdgeConnect SD-WAN edge platform.

"The team all agreed EdgeConnect was much better in terms of SD-WAN management, ease of deployment, and supporting our cloud strategy," Skinner says.

REQUIREMENTS

- Automate circuit failover without dropping VoIP calls and Citrix sessions
- Support an evolving cloud strategy
- Simplify deployment and management of WAN edge

SOLUTION

- Aruba EdgeConnect SD-WAN edge platform
- Aruba Boost WAN optimization performance pack
- Aruba Orchestrator centralized management console

OUTCOMES

- Projected savings of approximately £250,000 per year
- Increased application performance by 20 per cent on average
- Improved latency for file shares and backups by up to 70 per cent with Boost
- Improved network performance and quality of experience for end users
- Enabled higher network uptime with automated, sub-millisecond link failover

RAPID DEPLOYMENT ACROSS THE GLOBE

In less than six weeks, Vitec rolled out the EdgeConnect platform to 19 global sites in its Production Solutions division—from Costa Rica, across New York and London, to Singapore, Japan and China.

At each location, the EdgeConnect platform is now terminated with at least two WAN transport links, which may be a combination of dedicated internet access (DIA), commercial broadband, or 4G/5G LTE. Skinner also deployed a virtualized EdgeConnect appliance in Microsoft Azure. MPLS has since been decommissioned.

With the SD-WAN in place for the Production Solutions division, Skinner is now working with Vitec's Imaging Solutions division to assist them in deploy-

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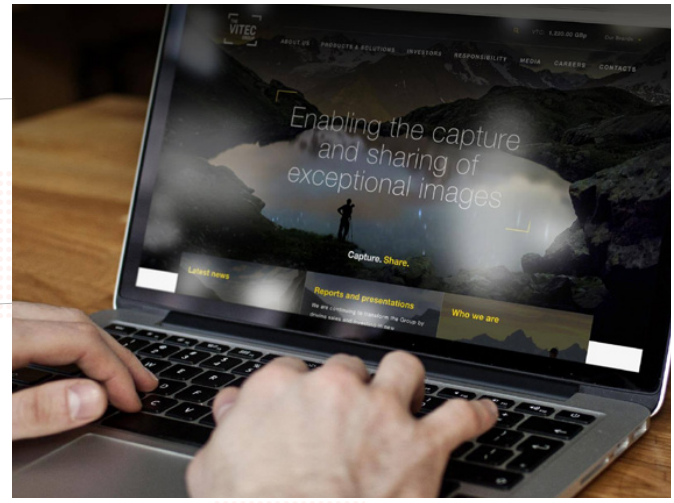
Head of Corporate Networks and Infrastructure,
The Vitec Group Plc

ing the EdgeConnect SD-WAN edge platform across additional global locations—approximately 20 sites, from its Italy-based headquarters, through the rest of Europe, and across Asia and Australia.

SEAMLESS USER EXPERIENCE FROM DATA CENTER TO CLOUD

Vitec's Production Solutions division runs its critical business applications—product lifecycle management (PLM), enterprise resource planning (ERP), customer relationship management (CRM), Skype for Business, and others—in a centralized data center in the UK, using Citrix for application delivery.

Skinner reports that with technical capabilities such as path conditioning, quality of service (QoS), and dynamic path control delivered by the EdgeConnect platform, application performance has improved on average about 20 per cent. "Citrix is much snappier," he notes.



By taking advantage of the optional Aruba Boost WAN optimization performance pack, Skinner also accelerated other services such as backup and file sharing. "Using Boost with our Veeam backups, we've seen a 70 per cent latency improvement across the line," he says. "SharePoint and our patching software have also seen latency improvements of 60 to 70 per cent."

VoIP calls uninterrupted during circuit outages

With automated, sub-millisecond circuit failover, network uptime and quality of service improved significantly.

Moreover, by using business intent overlays, Skinner has been able to prioritize applications and ensure each application receives the network resources required to deliver the highest quality of experience to end users. For example, voice is designated as real time to eliminate latency and jitter, and ensure no dropped calls.

Skinner recalls an incident while still transitioning from MPLS to broadband on the SD-WAN: "We had our MPLS circuit go down just as a company all-hands meeting was starting. But with EdgeConnect, the voice traffic jumped right onto broadband and nobody even noticed."

Smooth transition to cloud services

While the majority of Vitec's applications currently run on premises, the company is transitioning into the cloud. Today, workloads such as web servers, domain controllers, Office 365 authentication servers, and federation services to other SaaS applications are running in Microsoft Azure.

Skinner notes, "The ability to extend SD-WAN connectivity into the cloud is essential for us. From the end user's perspective, we want them to have a seamless experience connecting to applications whether they are on premises or in the cloud. With EdgeConnect that's been a success."

SAVES SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNTS OF TIME AND MONEY

One of Skinner's main objectives with SD-WAN was to consolidate and simplify the WAN edge, and EdgeConnect has made that possible. For example, the EdgeConnect platform provides unified routing interoperability and a zone-based stateful firewall, enabling Skinner to retire conventional edge routers and firewalls.

Ultimately, Skinner expects to reduce the WAN edge infrastructure to just three devices—the EdgeConnect platform, a network switch, and a wireless access point—shrinking the footprint and producing attractive financial savings.

"By moving to an all-broadband SD-WAN and consolidating the WAN edge with EdgeConnect, we're expecting savings of a quarter-million pounds per year," Skinner says. "And that's a conservative estimate."

Frees staff to work on more strategic projects

In addition to saving money, the Aruba SD-WAN also helps Skinner and his team save time. The Aruba Orchestrator management console plays a key role in simplifying and centralizing SD-WAN management to improve business agility.

"Orchestrator has been one of the best parts of the SD-WAN deployment," Skinner remarks. "It's really simple to use and easy to see where a problem is. We can now have junior members of the staff use Orchestrator to diagnose problems, which frees up the senior people to focus on more strategic projects."

Delivers greater business agility

Skinner further points out that Orchestrator streamlines deployment of the SD-WAN as Vitec opens new locations. "We might close a site in one location, open another site somewhere else. Now we have the agility to handle those changes very easily. All we do is plug in the EdgeConnect appliance at the new site and push out the configuration with Orchestrator using zero-touch provisioning."

Skinner concludes, "Our goal with SD-WAN was to provide the highest quality of experience to our end users at lower cost, but also be more agile. The Aruba EdgeConnect SD-WAN edge platform has helped us achieve that goal."

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