

International Agri-business Boosts Employee Productivity, Operational Efficiency, and Business Agility

Case Study

Jamaica Broilers boosts network performance 20X and improves uptime to over 99 percent with Unity EdgeConnect SD-WAN edge platform

In many parts of the world, having a roast chicken on the dinner table is a weekly event. Freshly dressed poultry is plentiful in nearly any grocery. But in Jamaica and other parts of the Caribbean during the 1950s, the idea of walking into a store and picking up a chicken, already plucked, cleaned and ready for seasoning, was revolutionary.

All that changed when Sydney Levy established Jamaica Broilers—today, Jamaica Broilers Group, Ltd. Instead of wrestling with impossible logistics to import processed, ready-to-cook chickens, Jamaica Broilers acquired live chicks, raised them to maturity, and processed them locally. Over the last 60 years, this simple, yet highly effective approach spurred massive growth in the enterprise, which today comprises facilities across Jamaica, Haiti, and the U.S.

Naturally, communication among the company's distributed operations is critical. However, while the business grew and matured, its wide area network infrastructure lagged behind. The performance and reliability of the network was not keeping pace with business demand, which impacted efficiency. It was clear that without improvement, the network would impede the growth of the business.

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When Sheldon Mundle joined Jamaica Broilers Group as Group CIO, his first priority was to bring the network infrastructure up to speed with the business. "My role was to look at how best to provide a technology platform to help the business scale and grow. The goal was to prepare for digitalization of the business, and that's only possible with reliable and available network connectivity."



GAINED 20X
MORE BANDWIDTH



INCREASED
NETWORK UPTIME
TO 99%



REDUCED
LATENCY BY 87%

The EdgeConnect SD-WAN edge platform gives us much more flexibility. It allows us to do more in the cloud and adopt a hybrid model instead of backhauling everything to the data center. We can look at each business unit and provide the right mix of applications and services for their unique needs. It's opened up a whole world of new possibilities.

Sheldon Mundle, Group CIO, Jamaica Broilers Group Ltd.

Bringing new life to an aging network

The company's edge infrastructure was quite dated, with a majority of the routers and switches out of warranty across the region. Equipment went down on a regular basis, and even when it was up, the single MPLS link connecting regional facilities to the Kingston data center delivered a mere 5 Mbps of bandwidth.

Faced with the high cost and long time required to replace the company's aging routers and switches, Mundle consulted with local partner, Info Exchange Limited, a trusted team of IT experts with broad experience in network technologies and cloud. Leveraging their industry insights, Info Exchange presented Mundle with other options to address his WAN challenges, including software-defined widearea networking (SD-WAN).

Mundle explains, "SD-WAN was on our radar, but Info Exchange was instrumental in helping us evaluate vendors and choose a solution that best met our current and future needs."



After assessing the capabilities of several leading SD-WAN vendors, Mundle chose the Silver Peak Unity EdgeConnect™ SD-WAN edge platform. Key to this decision? "The flexibility of the EdgeConnect platform to work with any combination of transport connectivity was big so we could adopt dedicated internet links as we retired our MPLS network. We also liked that it provides a complete SD-WAN solution with features like path conditioning and quality of service, as well as WAN optimization, all unified in a single platform. In addition, the fact that EdgeConnect includes built-in security meant that we didn't have to scramble to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on firewalls for each of our locations. These things made the EdgeConnect platform very compelling."

He adds, "Another important factor was the maturity of Silver Peak as a company. They have thousands of customers, which gave us confidence. When we looked at the flexibility of the platform, the maturity of Silver Peak, and a local partner willing to roll up their sleeves and jump in, it was not a hard decision."

Greater performance and reliability to drive the business

Mundle and his team deployed the EdgeConnect platform at 13 company sites, enabling the full range of SD-WAN features such as dynamic path control, path conditioning, and quality of service. The MPLS circuits have been replaced with redundant Dedicated Internet Access (DIA) links at each site, bonded to maximize bandwidth utilization and provide instantaneous failover in the event of a circuit fault or outage. Most sites now have bandwidth of at least 100 Mbps—20 times greater than the previous MPLS network. The Jamaica sites also use microwave connectivity between the central data center and local facilities. In addition, the unified EdgeConnect platform includes the optional Unity Boost™ WAN optimization performance pack to accelerate critical applications such as enterprise resource planning (ERP) and to speed branch access to Microsoft Office 365.

With a business-driven, highly reliable EdgeConnect SD-WAN, Mundle gained the confidence to deploy a new VoIP system to enable better communication and collaboration among teams. Even in areas where telecom services are less consistent, leveraging EdgeConnect to provide quality of service over broadband assures consistent voice service.

“We would never have attempted to put in VoIP on our MPLS network,” Mundle says. “The EdgeConnect platform was instrumental in unlocking the value in our WAN investment.”



In addition, access to critical applications such as ERP and product distribution systems is now assured for the company's facilities regardless of location. In fact, ERP application availability increased from 90 percent to over 99 percent, while latency improved from an average of 50 milliseconds to 28 milliseconds in the U.S., and from an average of 20 milliseconds to 4 milliseconds in Jamaica.

The EdgeConnect SD-WAN edge platform also helped Jamaica Broilers improve data backup and recovery operations between its Kingston data center and a collocated failover site in the U.S. Previously, moving 600 GB of data from one site to the other took many days over the slow MPLS network. Now, Mundle says

they can confidently failover 600 GB of data to the original data center in as little as 17 hours.

Recovering data is also much faster over the SD-WAN. “Prior to having our SD-WAN, at best we could recover data to within 48 hours of the last transaction. Now, we can meet our recovery point objective, or RPO, in less than 15 minutes. Our recovery time objective, or RTO, also is less than 15 minutes, compared to 28 days when we only had MPLS.”

What have these improvements meant to the business? Mundle reflects, “Employees are more productive, and increased uptime allows our plants to produce more and get products out through our distribution systems more efficiently. For IT, the number of engineers needed to run our infrastructure is half what it would be if we had followed a conventional route. Instead of hiring a small army, we manage our entire wide area network centrally using Unity Orchestrator™ with our small team in Kingston.”

Mundle further points out that the EdgeConnect SD-WAN edge platform enables Jamaica Broilers Group to now focus on the future. “EdgeConnect gives us much more flexibility. It allows us to do more in the cloud and adopt a hybrid model instead of backhauling everything to the data center. We can look at each business unit and provide the right mix of applications and services for their unique needs. It's opened up a whole world of new possibilities.”

For more information on Silver Peak and our solutions, please visit: silver-peak.com

Customer

Incorporated in 1958, Jamaica Broilers Group Limited is a leading agri-business in the poultry market. For six decades Jamaica Broilers has been providing home-grown products at international standards through a commitment to innovation, embracing technology, and ongoing research. Today, the company's operations span three countries, involving everything from feed

mills, hatching eggs, and raising chickens to processing and distributing ready-to-eat offerings in retail stores.

Challenge

Overcome the bandwidth limitations and expense of MPLS to deliver high-quality voice over IP and increase the speed of transferring large project files while reducing WAN costs

Solution

Deploy the EdgeConnect SD-WAN platform to provide a unified WAN edge infrastructure, enabling Jamaica Broilers to systematically replace low-speed MPLS with redundant, bonded Dedicated Internet Access links and retire outdated routers and firewalls with integrated application-driven traffic control, security, quality of service, path conditioning, and optional Boost WAN optimization performance pack to accelerate business-critical applications

Results

- Increased available bandwidth 20X, from 5 Mbps to an average of 100 Mbps
- Improved uptime for critical applications from 90 percent to over 99 percent
- Reduced latency from an average of 30 ms to 4 ms when accessing centralized applications
- Accelerated large file transfers of up to 600 GB from many days to a few hours
- Improved RPO from 12 hours to less than 15 minutes, and RTO from 28 days to less than 15 minutes
- Elevated employee productivity and plant output with more efficient
- Eliminated WAN complexity and lowered costs, cutting in half the number of engineers needed to run the WAN and LAN infrastructure for 13 regional office locations in three countries



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