

GEA SECURES ITS NETWORKS WITH OPEN SYSTEMS MANAGED SASE



About GEA

GEA is one of the world's largest systems suppliers for the food, beverage, and pharmaceutical industries, providing advanced process technology, components, and services designed for sustainability and efficiency. It must follow standards controlled by government agencies worldwide. GEA's 18,000 employees develop machinery, plants, and advanced process technology, components, and services across 62 countries. Therefore, securing GEA's networks with Open Systems Managed SASE is critical to the success of the business and its focus on innovation.

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Paul Rigano, Director, Network Services, GEA

WHY CHANGE?

- Replace an MPLS provider and leverage the benefits of SD-WAN
- Find a cloud security-focused vendor to support the company's cloud-first approach
- Consolidate security vendors and implement a SASE platform

THE NEW REALITY

- GEA gained a customer-focused collaborator in Open Systems
- A comprehensive technology platform allows GEA to add services over time
- SASE has centralized internet connectivity and network security service for SD-WAN
- GEA has increased the visibility and transparency of network traffic

WHY IT'S BETTER

- Improved collaboration among global teams
- Leverage cloud-based applications more effectively
- Lower the number of escalations drastically
- See a unified overview of ISPs through a single pane of glass
- Get a better grip and greater visibility on network security

GEA provides machinery, process technology, and services to customers in the food, beverage, chemical, pharmaceutical, and marine industries. Their solutions span a wide range of sectors and play a role in everything from consumer goods, such as dairy products, prepared foods, and medicine, to industrial uses, like outfitting refrigerated cargo ships and producing centrifuges for the oil and gas industry.

Quality and safety are paramount. And given the global scope of the business and thousands of employees, secure connectivity is critical.

MPLS TO SASE

The GEA team worked with another vendor several years ago to provide an MPLS network. But in 2019, GEA's IT team sought to reduce complexity and increase agility and flexibility with a solution aligned with the company's cloud-first approach.

An SD-WAN was the ideal solution for GEA, a complex organization with a complex network. But the team wanted more than a vendor – they needed a partner they could rely on and collaborate with. Ideally, a partner as forward-looking as GEA was, given that the company had been working on a network optimization project involving SD-WAN, global WAN, and LAN optimization.

“What we lacked with the other vendor and the MPLS concept was transparency in what traffic is being used, toward what destination,” said Gert-Jan Terpstra, Director Service Owner IT – Network Services for GEA.

With Open Systems, the difference was clear. “I talked with our operations manager three weeks ago, and he gave an example of an older, 2,000-employee site where we had a weekly escalation during the MPLS era. But we have had almost no escalations during our Open Systems SD-WAN era. That says a lot.”

Microsoft Teams and Office applications are leveraged more fully by moving from MPLS to SD-WAN.

“We also like the fact that we have decentralized proxies. Having a local proxy at each site simplifies things for us,” says Paul Rignano, Director, Network Services, GEA. “We didn't have that with the previous vendor. As a result, our internet traffic is more secure than ever before. In addition, Open Systems Managed NDR services provide much more security visibility than our former managed IDS service provider. There's also a centralized portal where all network and security-related services are visible and configurable.”

“Open Systems helped GEA transition from MPLS to SASE, and they've been a valuable, collaborative partner during our move to the cloud.”

Gert-Jan Terpstra, Director Service Owner IT – Network Services

SASE: SECURE CONNECTIVITY MADE SIMPLE

Terpstra noted that an all-in-one modular solution is among the most significant selling points for the Open Systems Managed SASE service. “Open Systems’ ability to manage it end to end is the most important,” he added.

Open Systems Managed SASE provides GEA with a comprehensive suite of integrated and unified network and network security solutions managed through an easy-to-use customer portal. The underlying data platform helps drive future innovation and is delivered as a 24x7 managed service. As a result, GEA’s team experiences reliable and secure connectivity between users, sites, and applications.

GEA business units previously contracted for internet lines. So when problems arose, the IT team had to rely on the business to engage with the ISP – administration and billing wasn’t centralized. “It was cumbersome and fraught with difficulties,” Rigano recalls. “Now, with Open Systems, we have one company to deal with, and there’s a personal relationship. And having Open Systems SD-WAN connectivity has streamlined the support process.” Rigano also praised the Technical Account Management team. “The Technical Account Management team is easy to get in touch with and unhindered by bureaucracy,” he said. “Together with them, GEA can jump through hoops to accomplish things quickly.”

Rigano also noted that the Open Systems user-based pricing model is appealing. “It makes it easier for new sites to come on-line, for sure. In addition, you only need to deal with one-time costs,” he said.

CUSTOMER-DRIVEN INNOVATION

Customer-driven innovation is a hallmark of the Open Systems Managed SASE service, improving the product based on real-world needs.

“On the development side, I mentioned the strategic partnership – we make each other better,” said Terpstra. “That’s what I want to highlight. For example, it was great to see how our thoughts developed within the Open Systems environment with the zoning project we’re scoping. As strategic partners, we make each other better.”

Ease of use is another crucial point that Rigano noted, praising the Mission Control single pane of glass for managing the network, which they never had with the previous vendor. “Before, we had a lot of disparate portals, and we needed an overview of our ISPs in one place,” Rigano said. “Now, Open Systems gives us the visibility we need.”

“We are delighted because Open Systems Managed SASE makes it easy to manage and secure our network infrastructure.”

Paul Rigano, Director, Network Services, GEA