

CASE STUDY

Argentinian Retailer with 114 Stores Consolidates Its Infrastructure with Fortinet to Improve Network Connectivity and Stability

Grupo Dabra is an Argentinian family-owned company founded in 1970. Aiming to reach an omnichannel approach, or as the company likes to say “integrated retail,” the company sells sporting goods through three store brands—Dexter, Stock Center, and Moov—and their respective e-commerce websites. Currently, Grupo Dabra is the largest sports retailer in Argentina. As part of its expansion process, the group tackled a major challenge, the PARIS initiative, by the end of 2023, doubling its unit sales keeping the focus on customer experience.

The organization began a modernization process of its entire infrastructure at the beginning of 2021, including finding a technology partner to upgrade its data and communications networks. “We found in Fortinet a very favorable proposal compared to the competition in terms of delivery times, equipment capabilities, total cost of ownership, and return on investment,” says Marcelo Mangiacavalli, Information Technology Manager at Grupo Dabra.

The company chose Fortinet to deploy a communications, connectivity, and security platform for all its sites to optimally address all future business challenges.

High Availability and Secure Connectivity Solutions

Before implementing Fortinet’s solutions, Grupo Dabra had multi-brand solutions—some intended for small businesses, and some created for home users. The company was constantly suffering from connectivity problems because of these devices, as the system was not designed for a corporate environment with high demands, different types of traffic, and segmentation. “The main reason for migrating to Fortinet was to establish a failure-free infrastructure that would guarantee a network-wide continuous operation while ensuring the company’s profitability,” says Mangiacavalli.

Grupo Dabra conceived an ambitious project that sought to evolve its data network at different levels and consolidate it onto a single platform. Thus, the company began implementing the FortiGate Next-Generation Firewall (NGFW) in its headquarters, distribution center, and stores. It also deployed FortiAP access points to support Wi-Fi connectivity at all locations. Likewise, it replaced the existing switches across the entire network with FortiSwitch devices to protect all Ethernet connectivity. “We improved connectivity, costs, data network performance, and security with this new LAN Edge solution, while giving our clients a differential experience,” says Mangiacavalli.

The company deployed Fortinet LAN Edge solution in all stores, including warehouses and administrative areas. Wireless connectivity was essential to the company’s operations, as several processes depend on these links. For instance, some critical areas in the distribution center gather information, including IoT devices that must be connected all the time. In turn, offering Wi-Fi connectivity to



**GRUPO
DABRA**

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– Marcelo Mangiacavalli,
Information Technology Manager,
Grupo Dabra

Details

Customer: Grupo Dabra

Industry: Retail

Location: Argentina

**Number of Secure
SD-WAN Locations:** 117

store visitors was crucial. This service did not exist previously; but today, with the FortiAP, users have optimal access to the internet when they visit any location, and alternatively choose to buy online or in the physical store.

After these initial changes, the organization also required a homogenized network integrating all its locations under a single platform. Thanks to the NGFW firewall capabilities, the company was quick to implement the Fortinet Secure SD-WAN solution. This allowed them to replace the existing MPLS links between stores with redundant broadband links from different providers. As a result, Grupo Dabra estimates to reach savings of close to 75% in connectivity costs compared to the previous technology.

By having the locations integrated under Fortinet Secure SD-WAN, the company can automatically manage connectivity, which has positively impacted network performance. When one link fails, the solution enables the other internet channel so there is no service interruption. Since the solution rollout, the failures have disappeared, and today, the company has availability of almost 100%.

The enhanced security of Fortinet's solutions has been essential for the organization too. As a company that operates 100% virtually in the cloud, security is key to protecting applications, data, and transactions. "The Fortinet implementation exceeded our expectations. The solution is highly reliable, stable, scalable, and secure. We want to continue evolving hand in hand with Fortinet," adds Mangiacavalli.

Unified Platform for Simplified Administration

"Centralizing all the solutions with a single vendor makes integration much easier. With Fortinet, all the devices speak a common language and work together," states Mangiacavalli.

The FortiManager solution enhances the networking and security platform integration, enabling Grupo Dabra's IT team to manage the entire network in a unified way. In the past, the company's heterogeneous solutions prevented them from having comprehensive visibility of its infrastructure. Today, FortiManager allows the team to control all devices and the entire network from a single place. In this way, it is possible to quickly set up new stores, deploy configurations to multiple sites at the same time, and have broader and simpler control of the communications ecosystem.

This simplified administration means the IT team is more focused on improving processes, making adjustments, and implementing new security features. "We can concentrate on other projects, not so much on the day-to-day management and operation. This is because of the reliability we have found in Fortinet's solutions," concludes Mangiacavalli.

Business Impact

- High network availability to ensure operation of 114 remote stores
- Wi-Fi network stability to support IoT processes
- Centralized management of the entire network infrastructure
- Complete network visibility for easier, more comprehensive infrastructure control
- Achieved savings of close to 75% in connectivity costs

Solutions

- FortiGate Next-Generation Firewall
- Fortinet Secure SD-WAN
- FortiSwitch
- FortiAP
- FortiManager
- Fortinet LAN Edge

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