



CASE STUDY

Leading Dominican Fuel Distribution Company Connects Its Service Station Network Securely and Easily



Isla Dominicana de Petróleo Corporation is a company dedicated to the sale and distribution of petroleum-derived fuel products for the Dominican market, sold through the network of service stations, serving business, industries, and the general public throughout the country.

In 2017, the company became the exclusive representative of Shell fuels for the Dominican Republic, under a long-term brand agreement with the Anglo-Dutch company Shell Brands International. Isla Dominicana de Petróleo Corporation is a national leader in fuel distribution, with the largest and most complete service distribution network made up of more than 155 stations, of which 80 are operated directly by the company. In addition to fuel distribution, Isla Dominicana de Petróleo Corporation manages 28 service stations with convenience stores that offer a wide range of products and services. The strong growth of the company in recent years motivated it to look for security and connectivity solutions that would ensure communication between every location at any time, while keeping information secure and always accessible.

To achieve this, the company took advantage of the construction of a new headquarters building to implement a network infrastructure that would support not only the central office but also a smaller city office, in addition to the 80 service stations across the country.

Connectivity and Security Challenges

Networking, communications, and security technologies previously used by Isla Dominicana de Petróleo Corporation required improvements to support the expected growth, as well as to continue strengthening the culture focused on customer service. There were failures in the communications network caused by configuration problems. The Wi-Fi network coverage was not suitable to face the challenges that the expected growth brings. In addition, there was a hybrid implementation of analog and digital communication systems, which didn't allow the company to take advantage of all the benefits of the available solutions.

The problems continued at the service stations. Not all stations were directly connected to the headquarters. Where stations maintained redundant links to ensure connectivity, the company didn't have a solution to easily and quickly manage more than one internet channel.

The necessary technological overhaul involved many challenges, and the company evaluated several service providers and vendors before choosing Fortinet. Finding a solution that could be standardized for many sites and be agile and easy to manage was

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Isla Dominicana de Petróleo Corporation

Details

Customer: Isla Dominicana de Petróleo Corporation

Industry: Retail

Location: Dominican Republic

Business Impact

- Full network visibility and centralized management
- Secure and redundant connectivity between headquarters and service station network
- Telework deployment capabilities for customer service continuity
- Better cost-benefit ratio in hardware, services, and support

key given the challenge of operating an organization of this size with a small technology team. Moreover, Isla Dominicana de Petroleo Corporation wanted a more integrated implementation to avoid managing products of different brands to reduce the need for multi-specialized technical staff.

Technological Integration for an Innovative Perspective

The company decided to implement a secure software-defined wide-area network (SD-WAN) with SD-Branch using FortiSwitch, FortiAP, FortiGate, and Fortinet Secure SD-WAN to optimize its corporate network and communications infrastructure. This allowed it to guarantee wired and wireless connectivity with an integrated solution, and high-level security for all the data flowing within the organization. According to Alfred Rapozo, IT manager of Isla Dominicana de Petroleo Corporation, “the impact on security has been considerable, as Fortinet products offer enhanced functionalities in areas such as proactive threat detection, task automation, real-time updates, and integral visibility of the company’s security to make timely decisions. Furthermore, the simple administration of Fortinet products was highly valuable for our IT team by significantly reducing the management complexity of the network.”

The Fortinet Secure SD-Branch solution has been installed in all service stations that have convenience stores, directly connecting each location to the headquarters. The technology significantly improved the connectivity of each station, while allowing the management of redundant networks to avoid service disruptions. The possibility of transmitting data in a secure way has also allowed them to grow with new services and businesses at the stations.

“The secure SD-WAN capability was one of the most important requirements we had,” comments Rapozo. “That’s why we chose a solution built on FortiGate. With a single device, we can achieve fairly strong and robust security and redundant connectivity at the service stations.”

In addition, the outdated telephone system was replaced by Fortinet’s all-inclusive unified communications solution. The deployment of FortiFone Softclient for communication and FortiClient advanced endpoint protection enabled a swift response to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, which forced the company’s customer service team to work from home. Every employee received a smartphone linked via virtual private network (VPN) to the headquarters. They were connected via a FortiFone Softclient to the central FortiVoice PBX and handled customer calls without any problems.

Cost savings was another decisive factor for Isla Dominicana de Petroleo Corporation. While other proposals had a very high acquisition and maintenance value, Fortinet offered a favorable cost-benefit ratio, not only in terms of hardware but also in services and support.

Forward-facing Technology

The Fortinet solutions gave Isla Dominicana de Petroleo Corporation an easy-to-manage, robust infrastructure, which has gotten positive user feedback. Bolstered by these results, the company’s next objective is to extend the same connectivity model based on SD-WAN to the remaining service stations across the country.

The company is also considering expanding its SD-Branch solution by integrating the FortiNAC network access control solution into its service station networks. This will provide greater visibility and control over all devices connecting to the network. “Today, Fortinet offers a seamless, integrated, and reliable SD-Branch infrastructure that is both easy to maintain and simple to operate. This is crucial for our IT team, as it allows us to be more proactive and to ensure the company’s connectivity and information security,” Rapozo concludes.

Solutions

- FortiGate
- Fortinet Secure SD-WAN
- FortiSwitch
- FortiAP
- FortiVoice
- FortiFone
- FortiClient

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