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How One Manufacturer Improved Communications, Visibility, and Stability—With One Network

When a company acquires multiple companies, it acquires multiple infrastructures as well. And communicating across these different infrastructures can be difficult, if not impossible.

For UPG Enterprises, having multiple infrastructures was an opportunity for transformation, which is why they chose to go with Fortinet.

UPG Enterprises is a steel manufacturing business located outside of Chicago. They operate a diverse set of steel manufacturing businesses, and have made a number of acquisitions in recent years. For Joe Madda, Chief Information Officer at UPG Enterprises, these acquisitions brought in a lot of antiquated network and security equipment.

"Our business and our industry in particular is not one that has really adopted newer, cutting-edge technologies," says Madda. "And IT in general, but specifically security, has never really been at the forefront of their thinking and priorities."

Out of Many—One System

Madda joined UPG a year ago and quickly saw that the systems for these newly acquired companies worked fine independently, but not together, and communication and visibility suffered. Because they inherited so many older systems, it gave UPG a great opportunity to go with a best-in-class solution and implement it across all of their brands, companies, and locations. This would allow them to have better communication, visibility, and stability—without business disruptions.

Madda and his team chose to go with Fortinet solutions, and used their partner, ACP CreativIT, to start rolling them out. The plan was to integrate all 26 of their North America locations and utilize Fortinet technology throughout. "As of now, we have completed 19, and so far, it has been a really good experience," says Madda. "Certain aspects have been much easier than we anticipated. And ACP CreativIT has been a tremendous partner for us."

SD-WAN: The "Glue"

Fortinet's FortiGate Secure software-defined wide-area network (SD-WAN) solution enabled UPG to connect all of their locations—and improve visibility as well. "A big part of why we chose Fortinet was to have that single device that handles everything, including integrated VPNs and integrated firewalls," says Madda. "Prior to Fortinet, we had this tangled mess of VPN tunnels from location to location, and it was a real pain getting everybody communicating and having the right access.

"Getting that visibility across all those locations on that single pane of glass, and seeing everything all in one place, has been game changing for us."

UPG
STRONGER *TOGETHER*

"With a platform that is as easy to use as Fortinet has been for us, our team can be more proactive, and focus on the needs of our users, instead of having to troubleshoot networking issues or security issues all the time."

– Joe Madda, Chief Information Officer, UPG Enterprises

Details

Customer: UPG Enterprises

Industry: Manufacturing

Location: Oak Brook, Illinois

Business Impact

- Standardized network and platform improve communications, security, and stability

- Better network visibility on a single pane of glass enhances management

- Can proactively solve problems instead of constantly troubleshooting

- Significant savings in money and time

The SD-WAN will give UPG significant savings, in both money and time. "We expect that we will probably save $350,000–$400,000 a year in networking costs going forward, and that will only get bigger as we continue to grow," says Madda. "And just the time savings of having stable equipment is tremendously valuable."

In addition, getting everything simplified and standardized into one platform has been tremendously beneficial. "With a platform that is as easy to use as Fortinet has been for us, our team can be more proactive, and focus on the needs of our users, instead of having to troubleshoot networking issues or security issues all the time," says Madda.

Going forward, Madda sees that Fortinet will definitely be a part of their expansion plans, as they continue their course of mergers and acquisitions (M&As). "Fortinet has helped us create a playbook for us to rapidly scale and grow the business," says Madda. "Just the ease of use of being able to take a device, plug it in, and have everybody securely connected has been great for us, and it will definitely help us to grow in the future."

Solutions

- FortiGate Secure SD-WAN
- FortiGate Next-Generation Firewalls
- FortiClient

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