Customer case study

SD-WAN

Satisfied crews at Kotug thanks to SD-WAN

Kotug is a leading service provider of towage services, with a fleet of more than 100 tugboats active across the world.

Kotug offers a total package of towage services to offshore and onshore terminals, ports, salvage, and related maritime and management services. Kotug's head office is located in Rotterdam, the Netherlands and the company also boasts sites in Europe, Russia, Asia, Australia, Africa, and the Caribbean.

90 COUNTRIES

9,700 EMPLOYEES

125 SITES

90,000+ TOWING MISSIONS

Challenges

- Creating a flexible, scalable, and manageable corporate network.
- Optimize infrastructure for corporate cloud applications.
- Increase efficiency in network management and troubleshooting.
- To significantly improve the performance of the corporate network at sea.
- To enrich corporate communication with Skype for Business.

The solution

- Simplifying network management as much as possible.
- Centralising telephony and data solutions.
- Improving the performance for all connections in the IT network.
- Offering a scalable infrastructure for cloud-driven applications.
- Further optimizing the primary work process.

Eventual result

- A Software-Defined Wide Area Network (SD-WAN) connection, a way of creating transparent, resilient connectivity between various locations across the world including the central IT network.
- Kotug can easily manage its entire IT network with the SD-WAN Orchestrator and is also capable of ensuring its business-critical applications can fully function at sea, resulting in fewer internet performance problems.

"We facilitate the digital highway between all locations and users to offer central applications (incl. SAP) within Stahl's IT department. In other words: we offer the tools for users within Stahl."

From local to central control
Kotug's Corporate ICT Manager, Hans Boele, says: "The crew is completely satisfied and that's what you want, at the end of the day. These colleagues find themselves at sea for a month or more. It used to be difficult to receive WhatsApp messages, while we can now even conduct video calls with Skype with available and favorable bandwidths. Its personnel's wellbeing is the most important starting point for Kotug."

Hans came up with the idea and the design of the current IT network. He subsequently made this available to Kotug on a global scale. All this to transfer the entire IT architecture to the Cloud and smartly integrate applications.

Kotug focuses on big data and the integration of smart IT applications in the Cloud. Kotug is developing an application that can create a virtual planner, based on smart algorithms and big data. Kotug's challenge here is to map out all the shipping traffic in ports. The main objective is to produce smart planning for the sailing movements of ships, as well as their tugboats, to use them more efficiently.

What were Kotug's reasons for choosing SD-WAN?
Kotug's tugboats have to deal with expensive and unstable satellite connections. These types of connections can't be compared to those we are familiar with on the mainland. The fact that SD-WAN can make more efficient use of the available bandwidth at sea was an important reason for Kotug to opt for SDWAN.

Previously everything was installed locally on a tugboat and Kotug can now also offer applications from the Cloud. The technology's simple implementation, as well as the fact that other maritime organizations are using SD-WAN too, gave Kotug the confidence to launch this project together with Horizon Telecom. This technology means Kotug can now also simply analyze what the bandwidth is being used for and assess whether it would be possible to work with less bandwidth. This instantly results in substantial savings, considering the costs of a satellite connection.

How has Horizon Telecom contributed to this?
Horizon Telecom offered a clear and phased step-by-step plan starting with a Proof of Concept (POC), which quickly provided us with the required insight to determine the best solution and the resulting benefits. The implementation was subsequently realized by Kotug and Horizon Telecom, using Velocloud's very simple SD-WAN Plug & Play configuration and installation. The current network architecture is simple to set up and optimize. The positive experiences with Horizon Telecom during WAN and voice optimization projects were a big reason for Kotug to opt to work with Horizon Telecom again to realize this successful SD-WAN project.

So what's the result?

Critical Kotug applications, such as the Maintenance & Repair System and other relevant applications, can now easily and reliably be passed onto locations on the mainland.

Communication via e-mail can now also be guaranteed and sent without delay.

SD-WAN facilitates a stable internet connection with guaranteed bandwidth for critical applications, allowing spare bandwidth to be made available for private email, Skype calls, or other social media.

Hans: "You're dealing with dynamic IP addresses and connections at sea which are far from stable. Besides, the available bandwidth at sea is fairly limited and you certainly don't want to be thinking about complex IT configurations whilst sailing. The power of automatically connecting and configuring was a major advantage to us. This allows us to avoid manual and complex configurations. No tricky VPN settings and no more complex router configurations."

HANS BOELE
Corporate ICT Manager

24/7
WORLDWIDE