Hillstone
N E T W O R K S

Case Study

Securing Access and Mitigating Liabilities: Hillstone SD-WAN Solutions for Insurance Companies

SD-WAN unifies networks, enhances secure access speed, and offers centralized management with high visibility

Customer Profile

Customer

A leading insurance group

Sector

Finance

Location

Asia

Size

Nearly 1,000 branches nationwide; 170,000 employees; nearly 2M customers

Scope

Provides a broad range of insurance products, asset management, and ancillary services

Challenges

Geographically dispersed branch offices struggled with slow access speeds to corporate resources; the IT team lacked monitoring and management tools essential for Quality of Service (QoS) and cybersecurity

Requirements

- Intelligent routing and VPN link management for improved access speeds
- Global management and monitoring of egress links to quickly spot problems
- Centralized management and operation of branch devices
- Zero-touch provisioning (ZTP) for ease of deployment at new and existing branches
- Maintaining an enhanced security posture throughout the organization

Result

Hillstone's SD-WAN solution optimizes cost efficiency by leveraging existing Hillstone NGFWs, enhancing branch network access, and streamlining the overall management of extensive distributed networks.

The Challenge

Ensuring Seamless, Secure Access; Taming Management Woes

Founded just over a decade ago, this insurance group has expanded quickly to rank among the top ten insurance companies in the nation. In addition to core insurance offerings such as home, health, life and auto policies, the firm offers expanded services such as asset management and applications for the healthcare industry.

The company has also expanded its locations throughout the country, with nearly 600 branch offices directly serving customers and more than 2,000 offices overall. Similarly, the staff has grown to more than 150,000 personnel.

Rapid Growth Brings Challenges

The company's fast growth trajectory, however, has also brought a number of challenges. While the firm has invested in dedicated high-speed MPLS lines throughout its network, augmented by traditional internet links, staff often complained of sluggish access speeds while connecting to corporate resources. This in turn affected employee productivity and morale as well as customer satisfaction.

In addition, the corporate IT team lacked specific tools to monitor branches' vital internet links for bandwidth and link quality or to spot security issues. Further, most remote offices did not have skilled staff on site for needed maintenance and upgrades to the network equipment.

Defining a Strategy

After a great deal of research and discussion, the IT team determined that an access solution capable of globally managing, and monitoring egress links was needed. At the same time, the team wanted to implement centralized management and monitoring of the entire network, as well as management and operation of branch devices from the headquarters.

A software-defined wide area network (SD-WAN) was identified as the ideal solution to address these challenges. SD-WAN delivers faster, less expensive, more secure, and more scalable WAN connections that are far easier to deploy and manage – and if implemented correctly, would address all the challenges the team had identified.

The Solution

SD-WAN Delivers Wealth of Access, Management Benefits

Previously, the insurance firm had made significant investments in Hillstone next-gen firewalls (NGFWs) as a means of securing and defending its nationwide branch network. Therefore, it was a logical – and seamless – progression to repurpose this infrastructure as a part of an overarching Hillstone SD-WAN solution.

The Hillstone NGFWs continue to protect individual branch locations against cyberattacks and other threats, and now also serve as branch CPE (customer premises equipment) for the SD-WAN solution. A Hillstone Security Management platform (HSM) acts as the SD-WAN controller and provides centralized management and zero-touch provisioning (ZTP). The solution offers seamless deployment of new services and policies and effective monitoring for link quality.

> " **Hillstone Networks has given us valuable insights and support for our SD-WAN project. They've actively assisted us in bringing our branch devices online, which has been invaluable due to our large and geographically dispersed network.** "

Director of Technology Information Department

SD-WAN at Work

The Hillstone SD-WAN solution is deployed in a hub-and-spoke (a.k.a. star network) configuration, with the headquarters as the hub, and branches as spokes. By basing the solution on the existing NGFWs, it inherently incorporates robust security features for enhanced overall cybersecurity protection. This in turn optimizes existing resources, minimizes costs, and fortifies the security posture of the entire network.

SD-WAN creates an overlay network between branches and headquarters and integrates the existing internet links into the new WAN resource management infrastructure. While MPLS and landline links are used by this firm, Hillstone's SD-WAN solution can also incorporate diverse links such as 3G/4G/5G LTE. The SD-WAN automatically establishes IPsec VPN tunnels for each branch while dynamically managing quality of service.

The Conclusion

SD-WAN Improves Operations Across the Board

In addition to immediate improvements in access speeds from branch to headquarters, the Hillstone SD-WAN solution has also added to the overall reliability of the WAN. If, for example, the preferred link is down due to a network error or natural disaster, Hillstone SD-WAN's intelligent routing will simply redirect traffic around the problem area.

The platform also aids in monitoring and managing branch link status and enables proactive predictions and interventions for potential link changes. The company also makes use of the SD-WAN platform's extensive reporting structure to export data on branch link status. This streamlines the reporting and summarization of operational states.

Security is likewise improved. For example, the enhanced visibility afforded by Hillstone's SD-WAN allows the IT team to conduct comprehensive queries into firewall alarms across all branches, which significantly reduces troubleshooting time.

"Hillstone Networks has given us valuable insights and support for our SD-WAN project," said the insurance company's Director of Technology Information Department. "They've actively assisted us in bringing our branch devices online, which has been invaluable due to our large and geographically dispersed network."

About Hillstone Networks

Hillstone Networks is a leader in cybersecurity, delivering both depth and breadth of protection to companies of all sizes, from edge to cloud, and across any workload. Hillstone Networks' Integrative Cyber Security approach brings coverage, control, and consolidation to more than 26,000 enterprises worldwide.

Hillstone Networks is uniquely positioned with a platform that's future-proof to enable digital transformation and business continuity. For more information and to find your Integrative Cybersecurity solution, please visit www.hillstonenet.com

Learn more about Hillstone products mentioned in this case study

Hillstone Next Generation Firewall (NGFW)

Hillstone Breach Detection System (BDS)

Hillstone Security Management (HSM) ⇨

Read about Hillstone solutions

Cloud Workload Protection (CWPP) ⇨

Extended Detection & Response (XDR) ⇨

Zero-Trust Network Access (ZTNA) ⇨

Secure SD-WAN ⇨

Micro-segmentation ⇨

Network Detection & Response (NDR) ⇨

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