



Lords Group and Xalient's Journey to Enhanced Network Resilience and Efficiency





Lords Group Trading PLC partnered with Xalient for a successful network transformation using Fortinet SD-WAN. This strategic move optimized efficiency bolstered security and enabled seamless cloud migration. The partnership involved transitioning from MPLS to Fortinet's innovative solution, and a three-year managed services contract. Lords and Xalient now plan to construct a resilient hardware infrastructure and migrate their ERP system to the cloud, aligning with Lord's expansion goals.

Challenge

Lords Group Trading PLC (Lords), a prominent player in the construction industry, faced challenges in their WAN architecture and security infrastructure. With a network spanning 48 locations in the UK, they needed a solution to enhance resilience and efficiency, accommodating their growth aspirations. The challenge involved migrating from traditional VPN, addressing unsupported hardware, and improving security and bandwidth management.

Requirements

Lords' requirements were precise – they sought agility, scalability, and enhanced security. As their chosen partner, Xalient needed to provide a solution that met the current demands and future-proofed their network. The requirements encompassed shifting from MPLS to Fortinet SD-WAN, ensuring seamless integration of new sites, reducing setup times, and optimizing costs through affordable broadband connections.

Solution

The chosen solution was Fortinet SD-WAN, leveraging Xalient's cybersecurity and cloud security expertise. The implementation involved a meticulous process of migrating from VPN, refreshing hardware, and enhancing security and bandwidth management. This streamlined Lords' network and provided a cost-effective alternative to traditional MPLS connections. Xalient's role extended to overseeing the integration, setting up security protocols, optimizing network performance, ensuring operational efficiency.

Background

Lords Group Trading PLC (Lords) was established over 30 years ago with a strong family heritage. The small team that started has grown to almost 1000 colleagues, building a reputation for customer service and product offering.



Founded: 1985



48 locations in the UK



£450M Revenue in 2023

In the ever-evolving landscape of construction services, Lords stands as a formidable presence. Supplying building materials and plumbing and heating products through its network of merchant businesses and online platforms, in locations throughout in the UK. Lords partnered with Xalient in 2021, employing Xalient's expertise to assess its WAN architecture and fortify its security infrastructure.

Navigating a comprehensive consultancy journey, Xalient built a roadmap and implemented a strategic plan to transform Lords' network and security and support their growth. Recognizing the need for agility and scalability, Xalient proposed a shift from traditional MPLS to the innovative Fortinet SD-WAN.

The solution – Fortinet SD-WAN

Fortinet is a cornerstone in Xalient's strategic partnerships, as a trusted partner in cybersecurity, SD-WAN, and cloud security. One of Fortinet's standout merits lies in its SD-WAN capabilities, a networking solution that allows organizations to simplify the management and operation of their wide area network (WAN) connections.

Fortinet's SD-WAN solution combines networking and security functionalities, providing a comprehensive approach to managing and securing traffic flow across an organization's network, especially in geographically dispersed locations.

Implementation

Working closely with Fortinet, Xalient designed a solution to meet Lords' requirements. This involved migrating from the VPN, refreshing unsupported hardware, and enhancing the security infrastructure and bandwidth management. By addressing these essential aspects, Xalient has reduced site setup times and seamlessly integrated new sites into the new network fabric. Xalient took charge of the implementation process, ensuring the Fortinet SD-WAN was seamlessly integrated into Lord's existing infrastructure, including configuring the SD-WAN deployment, setting up security protocols, and optimizing network performance. By employing affordable and easily accessible broadband connections, Fortinet SD-WAN reduced the costs associated with traditional MPLS connections, providing a cost-effective alternative.

Lords employed Xalient through three acquisitions, with fifteen sites currently live and operational and the remaining sites on track for completion throughout 2024. The standardized approach ensures operational efficiency

and enables Lords to work more efficiently with a dependable Fortinet SD-WAN solution, enhancing performance and resilience. This centralized security policy has improved perimeter posture, providing Lords with a turnkey solution for mergers and acquisitions. Xalient's direct, optimized access to cloud services has enabled cloud migration, reducing resource requirements.

Cementing the partnership, a three-year managed services contract was signed with Xalient in May 2023. Lords chose Xalient's Managed Services (MS) to improve the efficiency and dependability of their IT operations. Xalient continues to provide ongoing support and management services to ensure the continued effectiveness and security of the implemented Fortinet solutions. This involves monitoring network performance, troubleshooting issues, and implementing necessary updates or modifications.

Why Xalient?

Key factors contributing to this success include Xalient’s in-depth understanding of Lord’s applications, demonstrated competencies, resource deployment agility, dedicated account support, and outstanding customer feedback. Implementing Fortinet SD-WAN enhanced Lord’s network security and facilitated rapid site setup and deployment. Darren Price, General Merchandising Trading Managing Director for Lords, said, “*Xalient has been a friendly professional team guiding us in all our network needs.*”

What is next?

Looking ahead, Lords is working with Xalient to construct a resilient, dual, and universally available hardware infrastructure on all key sites, primarily focusing on migrating their ERP system to the cloud. This strategic move aims to eliminate reliance on on-premises hardware. ERP migration in the cloud and the cloud services provided by Xalient will significantly reduce the time to set up new sites. This streamlined approach requires fewer person-hours and physical efforts from engineers and site contractors, translating into substantial time and cost savings.

This strategic initiative aligns with Lord’s expansion plans, emphasizing the importance of efficient transitions for businesses they acquire. In tandem, they aspire to transition all existing and future acquisitions to the same Fortinet SD-WAN network. Beyond Fortinet services, Lords envisions a direct collaboration with Xalient and the ISPs (Internet Service Providers). Xalient’s role will be pivotal in facilitating coordination between Fortinet and the ISPs, ensuring cohesive and efficient network connectivity management.

Find out more at www.xalient.com



About Us

Xalient combines transformative identity, security and networking technologies with intelligent managed services and AIOps innovation to help keep the world’s largest brands more resilient, adaptable, and responsive to change.

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