



BILFINGER IMPROVES SPEED, EFFICIENCY AND CONTROL WITH VMWARE SD-WAN BY VELOCLOUD SOLUTION FROM VIDENS



INDUSTRY
CONSTRUCTION AND ENGINEERING

HEADQUARTERS
GERMANY

Requiring flexibility in spinning up full WAN network in days to serve customers in remote locations, Bilfinger turned to SD-WAN for fast deployments.

About Bilfinger Industrial Services

Bilfinger Industrial Services is the industrial benchmark for projects and maintenance on industrial assets. Bilfinger contributes to the safety and availability of these assets for clients in Belgium and the Netherlands. HSEQ, cooperation, efficiency and innovations are the core of the companies' strategy.

With over 60 years' experience, Bilfinger industrial services are delivering either integrated or as separate disciplines: isolation, scaffolding, rope access, conservation, tracing, asbestos removal, fire protection and noise control. In Belgium and the Netherlands, Bilfinger Industrial Services employs approximately 1,300 employees. On top of that, up to 1,200 people are sub contracted. The company is part of the German publicly traded industrial concern Bilfinger SE.

Bilfinger's Wide Area Network

Anton Hooijdonk is Senior Systems Engineer at Bilfinger Industrial Services. He is responsible for the implementation and management of core network and system components and advises on future expansions and implementations of ICT systems.

Anton Hooijdonk: "We have nine branches and for large clients in the chemical, oil & gas, food, energy and steel industry we operate from a facility on their sites, which means we have people working on dozens of customer locations. One of the strengths of Bilfinger Industrial Services is that we can act very fast. We have to be able to have people working on every location in the Benelux—including all necessary IT—within two days from receiving an order from our clients.

"This also means we need to be able to have a full functioning WAN connection up and running within this timeframe. Increasingly we work on locations where our telco was not able to deliver the required connectivity in time, for example newly build locations or industrial areas. For these locations we can use a 4G mobile network as the carrier, but on top of that we need a stable and secure connection."

SD-WAN, Videns IT Services and VMware SD-WAN™ by VeloCloud®

Anton Hooijdonk did research on possible solutions and soon concluded that Software Defined WAN (SD-WAN) technologies would satisfy this need for Bilfinger. Anton Hooijdonk: "I have looked at the functionalities and capabilities of a small number of SD-WAN vendors, but soon found VeloCloud to be the most mature and complete solution. We teamed with VeloCloud partner Videns IT Services, who conducted an SD-WAN Proof of Concept based on VMware SD-WAN for us. The PoC really convinced us of VMware SD-WAN, so we decided to implement it throughout our wide area infrastructure."

Objectives for the SD-WAN Implementation

For Bilfinger, innovation and digitization are important drivers for improved efficiency. Digitization of business processes, smart apps, big data and sharing of information with clients has also helped the organization to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

Anton Hooijdonk: "There are a number of things we wanted to achieve for Bilfinger with this VMware SD-WAN implementation. Our primary objectives were the ability to add new connections fast and improve control through centralised management of our WAN. Another driver was that we didn't want to be dependent on our telco partner anymore; we wanted to have the ability to 'mix and match' providers and connection protocols, ranging from MPLS to ADSL and 4G. We also established increased availability and stability through redundant connections on every location, for example an ADSL connection with 4G as back-up. I must say: Videns IT services and VeloCloud helped us achieved all we wanted, and more."

The Experiences with Videns IT Services and VeloCloud, Now Part of VMware

Anton Hooijdonk: "I don't exaggerate if I say VeloCloud makes me, and my team, very happy and enthusiastic. The software is really easy to configure through a simple and intuitive web user interface. In addition to that, VeloCloud offers all the tools we need for troubleshooting.

"The same goes for Videns IT Services. They helped us prove VMware SD-WAN could actually work very well for Bilfinger Industrial Services and the people of Videns are just as flexible as VeloCloud, which is a very good match. Videns IT Services provides us with new VMware SD-WAN appliances if we need additional capacity, which we can configure and implement ourselves. They are always available if we need additional support or have any special needs or requests."

Benefits

As a result of the SD-WAN implementation, Bilfinger Industrial Services has experienced a number of business and technical benefits. The stability of connections has significantly improved on all locations where we implemented SD-WAN. Furthermore the speed and user experience have increased.

Anton Hooijdonk: “Our users are happy with the new situation, which is great. But we also see clear benefits from an IT perspective. Our own employees work via Citrix, which is highly efficient in terms of network traffic. But some of our partners for temporary workers use their own IT systems over our lines. We had no insight into that traffic, but with our VMware SD-WAN solution we have full network visibility—meaning we can now more effectively manage application traffic and performance.

“Another big advantage is the ability to centrally manage the whole WAN. A good example: we recently had to upgrade 23 routers, which used to be a relatively big project with onsite visits. Besides the necessary preparations, the actual upgrade now took us no longer than 15 minutes! Also we save a lot of time on onsite work such as printer configuration: we can do it all remotely now, which is a great efficiency improvement for our small IT team.

“We still use the configuration developed by Videns IT Services for the PoC, a good example of the quality Videns stands for. When we deploy a new appliance the configuration is loaded and as soon as it is connected to the internet, our secure connection is live.”