NLMK Group Benefits from Intelligent and Automated Network

NLMK Group is an international metallurgical company. It has embarked on an accelerated digital development program to maintain its competitive advantage and respond to market conditions. This was hampered by NMLK’s legacy network which had performance issues preventing the smooth delivery of apps. The company therefore implemented VMware SD-WAN™ across 36 geographically dispersed sites to create a centralized, easy-to-support, secure network. This has improved the delivery of applications, allows the IT team to focus on more strategic tasks and enables other sites to be easily added to the corporate network.

A digital metallurgic production

NLMK Group is an international metallurgical company with assets in Russia, India, USA and a number of sites in Europe. The company specializes in the production of full-cycle steel products, from the production of raw materials for iron and steel to the final derivatives: flat-rolled metal. In 2019, the company produced 12 million tons of steel in 59 countries around the world. It employs 55,000 people, with 48,000 of these employees working in Russia at production sites across five regions.

NLMK initiated an accelerated digital development program called “Strategy 2022”. This strategy is marked by high resilience to external market factors and is based on enhancing the company’s competitive advantages: low internal cost; efficient vertical integration; diversification by product and by market; and a high level of production and sales localization. At the same time, market trends such as the centralization of IT systems and
VMware SD-WAN in five offices during the same day, and it didn’t matter how many computers we had on these sites — a few dozen or a few thousand,” said Medvenskiy.

On average, it took a couple of hours to preconfigure the equipment and a half an hour to switch to VMware SD-WAN with just a few minutes of downtime. In the early stages of the project, NLMK began using the VMware SD-WAN Orchestrator for cloud-based network management and monitoring, making it simpler to add new sites to the VMware SD-WAN network. Medvenskiy explained that it also improved the project speed. The tool helps the company to monitor and properly manage the network in all branches, including at remote sites.

“Our tactical IT goals have been reached with the help of VMware SD-WAN. Automatic traffic prioritization, multi-channel transmission and simple policy management across all branch offices have been achieved,” he said.

Customer-oriented network drives the fastest app delivery
VMware SD-WAN provides a centralized, easy-to-support networking platform that not only solves IT issues but also creates additional value for end-users, information security and the business.

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LEONID MEDVENSKIY
HEAD OF IT INFRASTRUCTURE AND INFORMATION SECURITY, NLMK GROUP
Looking ahead

As a company with a wide geography of production sites, it is important for NLMK to ensure the stability and transparency of its IT infrastructure. NLMK considers investments in modern technologies to be a route to increase operational efficiency. The project’s results have exceeded expectations, and Medvenskiy is sure that the cooperation between NLMK and VMware will continue to evolve.

Recently the company moved virtual machines from several virtualization platforms into a single VMware vSphere® platform. The company also uses VMware vRealize® Network Insight™ together with VMware SD-WAN. It provides network visualization and analysis tools to improve understanding of the corporate network and has already helped NLMK to improve network security, as well as to optimize its performance.

The new solution is supported by just two IT specialists who spend only 20% of their time directly on VMware SD-WAN support. Centralized management through VMware SD-WAN Orchestrator allows the configuration of dozens of firewalls and routers from a single console. Previously, specialists had to make changes on each device separately. The customer can also preconfigure templates and thus speed up the process of connecting new offices to the corporate network and minimizing configuration errors. At the same time, centralized management provides transparency to the security team and helps to identify and block not-allowed traffic between offices.

How did NLMK use VMware SD-WAN to get the best corporate apps performance while working remotely? See how #VMware helped @nlmk_news to rethink the network and increase the speed and reliability of apps delivery.