



Cost reduction of up to 60 percent



Stable data lines in a redundant environment



More flexibility in choice of providers



Quick return on investment (in one year and eight months)

Sumitomo Bakelite Europe Upgrades Connections Between its Production Sites with VMware SD-WAN

Sumitomo Bakelite Europe is a world leader in high-performance plastics solutions. Like any other business, it had to save costs on several levels. It needed to create a fast and secure link between its three European locations, so SBHPP replaced the classic MPLS data line with a modern VMware SD-WAN™ solution. Costs dropped by as much as 60 percent without impacting business operations.

Delivering solutions based on innovative materials

Sumitomo Bakelite High Performance Plastic Products Europe (SBHPP) has been part of the Japanese chemical group Sumitomo Bakelite Co. since 2000. The business unit is a world leader in high-performance plastics solutions. Among other things, it produces phenolic resin and is a major supplier to the automotive sector where its solutions are used in the production of car tires. In Europe, the group has three sites, two of which are in Belgium (Genk and Gent) and one in Spain (Montornès). SBHPP's ambition is to be a trusted partner to its customers and help them improve their businesses by delivering solutions based on innovative materials.



SBHPP Europe is part of Sumitomo Bakelite Co., Ltd. The company is a major world player in the chemical sector. SBHPP has three sites in Europe (headquartered in Genk) and employs some 260 people. It is responsible for the production of phenolic resins, a type of glue that is important in the production of car tires. sbhpp-europe.com/nl

INDUSTRY

Manufacturing

LOCATION

Genk, Belgium

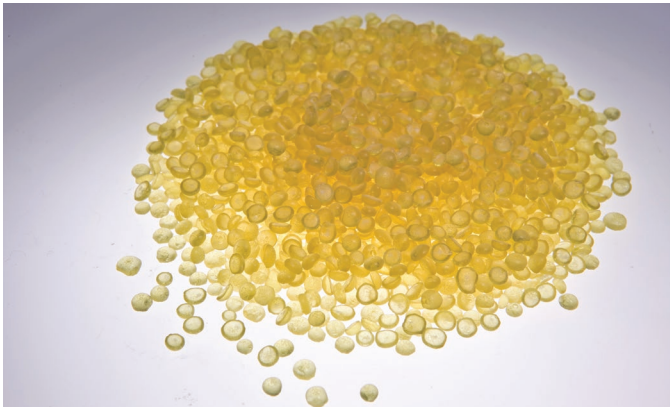
ABOUT AGISKO

Agisko is a Belgian integrator with a focus on the digital workspace. It has expertise in the transition of applications, infrastructure, security, and mobile devices. Agisko was the first partner in Benelux to obtain the VMware Master Services Competence Digital Workspace certificate. agisko.be

VMWARE FOOTPRINT

VMware SD-WAN

VMware SD-WAN Orchestrator



Cutting costs in a highly controlled industry

Technology is crucial in the chemical sector today and SBHPP's engineering department is continuously working on the renewal and automation of production lines. As a chemical company, SBHPP must comply with the Seveso Directive. The companies subject to these regulations produce or process dangerous substances and must comply with strict safety rules. For example, the physical presence of people is required in order to monitor the processes. Automation is therefore not easy. Another challenge for a Seveso company is of course cybersecurity. "A security breach that blocks production or changes the composition can have catastrophic consequences. That is why we are increasingly focusing on IT security and the protection of data," says Mark Renders, European ICT Coordinator at SBHPP.

The COVID-19 pandemic behooved the IT team to go beyond enabling efficient work to facilitating efficient remote work. In doing so, they had to review and reduce costs at the group level. At the request of management, the IT team looked at where they could make savings without sacrificing quality. The MPLS connection came into the picture. This connects the three production sites in Europe with each other and with the external data center which is also in Belgium. The MPLS network via provider Proximus was used for the VPN tunnels between the sites and to send Citrix VDI traffic to the data center. That solution was stable, but expensive. SBHPP paid around €125,000 annually just for the connection between the four sites.

Quick choice, new partner on the way

SBHPP started looking for alternatives. Renders notes that: "It had to offer at least the same stability in data traffic, be redundant, and we wanted to be less dependent on a single provider (as with MPLS). The most important criterion was of course cost reduction."

VMware SD-WAN came into the picture quickly because it would reduce the monthly cost for the data lines by as much as 60 percent. "But what won us over, in addition to the cost reduction, in choosing VMware SD-WAN was the greater independence it offered. We are no longer tied to one provider and can now even work with multiple providers simultaneously," says Renders.

VMware SD-WAN is a software-defined WAN overlay that ensures high-quality application performance and availability for end users while lowering networking costs. SD-WAN provides a software abstraction to create a secure, reliable, and transport-independent network overlay and decouples networking software services from the underlying hardware.

VMware SD-WAN Edge devices expand WAN bandwidth by logically combining WAN links to offer the capacity that individual applications need. They differentiate traffic and apply customizable business policy to prioritize mission-critical applications. The VMware SD-WAN Orchestrator is a cloud-hosted or on-premises, secure, and scalable web-based central management tool that provides simplified configuration, provisioning, monitoring, fault management, logging, and reporting.

The order for eight VMware SD-WAN Edge devices and the necessary licenses was placed through one trusted hardware partner. "But we noticed that the technical partner worked in a rather complex way during the implementation with many people abroad. That didn't work well for us and we looked for a partner via VMware Benelux who could carry out the project onsite."

That partner turned out to be Agisko, which took over the project at the end of June 2020 and was able to have the VMware SD-WAN solution live by September. "It was a great case for us to deploy with a smooth configuration and migration. This was not possible without the trust of the customer," says Thibaut Noben, Technical Consultant at Agisko. Renders adds: "Agisko's engineers helped us perfectly on our way. Thanks to Agisko the rollout went quickly."

"VMware SD-WAN reduced our monthly cost for the data lines by as much as 60 percent. This is €72.000 yearly. The new setup is faster than the old MLPS connection and gives us more flexibility to choose any provider."

MARK RENDERS
EUROPEAN ICT COORDINATOR
SBHPP



Local providers, more flexibility

Each site is now redundant in terms of hardware with two SD-WAN Edge devices per site, and at each European site, SBHPP now works with at least two providers. This gives the organization more independence, but it also offers it more stability. “If one provider goes down, we still have the other provider lines as backup. Before, if our MPLS provider had a problem, the backup from the same provider was also down,” says Renders.

This solution allows SBHPP to combine different standard internet lines (VDSL or fiber) and even bundle them into one line. It allows them to merge different bandwidths (100 Mbps each, for example) into one larger available bandwidth (up to 250 Mbps at each site). “The new setup works faster. Copying data to the data center is effectively faster. Ping tests prove this. Previously the speed was 14 ms, now it’s only eight ms,” clarifies Renders.

The solution also offers more flexibility in choosing providers. In Spain, SBHPP works with Telefonica and Vodafone, while in Belgium, it works with three providers (Telenet, Proximus, and Destiny). In addition, the IT team can also combine fiber and VDSL in one box. Renders adds that: “We can indicate which data line we use for each application.”

Cheaper, more overview, and scalability

The new setup reduced the monthly cost of the data lines by 60 percent. Whereas SBHPP used to pay €10,203 a month, VMware SD-WAN has brought this down to €4,000 a month. The investment in the new solution - which includes the monthly subscriptions for the various lines, the hardware, and the licenses for five years - will be paid off in one year and eight months.

Additionally, the IT team has a better overview of the traffic and status of the data lines thanks to the VMware SD-WAN Orchestrator portal. “From anywhere and any device we can remotely control our SD-WAN Edge devices. In the past only the MPLS provider saw what was wrong. With this SD-WAN solution and the portal we have a great overview and notice immediately if something is wrong. Any possible issues are solved more quickly because we are in direct contact with the local providers,” explains Renders.

“VMware SD-WAN has reduced the workload for the IT team, especially in case of issues. And if we expand to other European countries or elsewhere in the world, we only need to install an SD-WAN Edge locally and contact the local provider for a data line.”

Looking ahead

Network renewal at SBHPP continues. The company currently has a new VoIP telephone exchange and the renewal of fiber on the internal LAN of the Genk site. To support its employees better in a remote working setting, SBHPP Europe will also invest in VMware Horizon® to replace its Citrix solution. The migration to Horizon is planned by the end of March at the three sites.

In addition, SBHPP is also looking at the possibilities of using VMware Workspace ONE™. Integrations between VMware SD-WAN and Workspace ONE can add value for the management and remote assistance of mobile devices. And inherently, an added layer of security of the devices and the data.



Discover how VMware SD-WAN helped Sumitomo Bakelite Europe to have a better performing data connection between its European sites at a lower cost [#VMware @VMwareSDWAN](#)