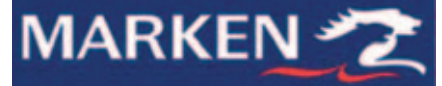


Client Case Study



▶ Marken

Client Overview

Marken is a company that specialises in offering time-sensitive delivery solutions to customers around the globe. A large part of its business involves the worldwide delivery of live medical samples such as tissues and cultures.

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David Atkinson, IT Manager, Marken



▶ Key Business Benefits

- ▶ Outsourced, round-the-clock management of VPN
- ▶ Decreased operational costs of networks
- ▶ Operational independence from parent company
- ▶ Timely fixes of problems
- ▶ On-hand advice for local installations and maintenance
- ▶ Consistent technical team with dedicated experience
- ▶ Secure remote access to corporate IT and public Internet services

▶ Vistorm Services

- ▶ Managed Firewall Services

▶ Technology Deployed

- ▶ NetScreen 50 Security Appliance
- ▶ NetScreen Remote Security Software (Laptop Connection to VPN)
- ▶ 15 x NetScreen 5XP Security Appliance

A wholly owned subsidiary of Exel, Marken has a network of 18 offices spread across Europe, the US, Asia and Africa. It also enjoys a large number of strategic partnerships and access to Exel's global network, giving it a presence in 120 countries worldwide at over 1200 locations.

The company uses Global Express Management as its global operational system. This internally-developed system covers 100 per cent of its Express delivery activities. It serves the Marken offices globally, allowing data share, global process control and global shipment tracking. All of this means that rock-solid IT is vital for Marken to deliver the highest standards of global logistics that its customers demand and expect.

Operational independence and lower costs

Until 2003, Marken shared an Equant frame relay network with its parent company, Exel. The costs of the network were shared too. However, Marken's operational requirements differed from Exel's, and it became apparent to the company that it required operational independence to continue its success. With the decision to close Exel's frame relay network in the US, a move that could have affected three of the company's offices, Marken was faced with the possibility of having to take on 100 per cent of the network in US to keep its American offices operational. A tough decision had to be made.

David Atkinson, IT manager at Marken, was aware that Marken's sister company, Mercury VMD, was not incorporated into the Exel WAN. Making some enquiries, he found out that Vistorm might be able to provide the necessary services needed to solve Marken's problem.

'The initial meetings at Vistorm proved to be productive and friendly,' says Atkinson. 'During our discussions we made it clear we needed Vistorm to provide a low-cost solution to our problem. But, crucially, we also insisted that the solution must comply with the Exel Corporate IT Standards.'

'We wanted a solution that would safeguard the security of our network, allow us to operate independently and offer end users with increased safe connectivity to our corporate IT.'

With cost-effectiveness a key factor, Marken asked Vistorm to implement a Virtual Private Network (VPN) using the public Internet as its access route. Vistorm then set about designing, building and implementing a VPN using Marken's London Head Office as its hub. The team decided to use a NetScreen 50 in the London offices and NetScreen 5XP in each of the remote offices.

'The initial discussions with the technical consultants at Vistorm provided a core set-up for each individual office,' continues Atkinson. Because of the way the VPN was configured,' he says, 'the set-up was then modified to meet the needs of each individual office.'

Vistorm carried out all of the work in London, including the implementation of the rules base for each remote office NetScreen 5XP. Physical installation was successfully carried out locally by Marken staff in each location.

'During the implementation of hardware and software in each office, a Vistorm consultant was on standby to offer advice when it was needed and to rectify any teething problems in a timely manner,' says Atkinson.

The VPN was soon up and running. Marken then retained Vistorm to provide a fully managed service for the London hub, ensuring that any threats or problems could be dealt with quickly and efficiently. Vistorm's Managed Security Services team continues to monitor all of Marken's remote offices to ensure the uninterrupted availability of the VPN.

Saving money and improving service

Marken was looking for a two-fold solution to a dilemma that it faced in 2003. The company needed to reduce its network costs while at the same time establishing operational independence from its parent company, all within Exel's Corporate IT Standards. With the VPN solution now in place, Vistorm is confident that the right solution has been chosen and that it has, and will continue to deliver significant cost savings to Marken.

'We believe Marken will see a return on investment in their VPN within the first 12 months,' Vistorm says. 'There should be savings from the cost of maintaining the old frame relay network. And we are confident that overall costs will be reduced by over 50 per cent from Year Two. On top of that, Marken has achieved operational independence while improving remote access to its corporate IT (and public Internet services) for all of its laptop users.'

David Atkinson, IT manager at Marken clearly concurs. 'Employing Vistorm to provide us with security and communications has enabled Marken, for the first time in the company's history, to provide an external interface to Marken clients,' he says. 'Vistorm has provided advice on security issues and helped to develop services that were only previously available by fax or by telephone.'

'Despite the widespread distribution of Marken offices around the world, and at times having to adjust implementation dates (due to the timing of Exel's ongoing Communication Project), the project was delivered on time. The team at Vistorm managed the project so that all of our deadlines were met.'

'On the technical side, the project was handled by the same team of technical consultants, giving them a good knowledge of our ongoing requirements. A good working relationship has developed between them and the team at Marken. We always find that any problems are handled quickly and effectively.'

Building long-term business relationships

Vistorm always aims to provide IT solutions that meet the specific needs of its customers, and its teams always deliver the highest standards of technical expertise and professional services possible. Vistorm's managed services are designed to reassure clients and ease the burden of day-to-day administration of crucial IT operations. They give clients round-the-clock peace of mind, with the absolute minimum of system downtime – at a fraction of the cost of providing the services in-house.

'Vistorm has become an integral part of Marken's communication plan,' says Atkinson. 'I now don't hesitate to seek Vistorm's advice and expertise and to use its services. The team at Vistorm is willing to advise Marken on operational questions even when, by doing so, this may fall outside of their remit. What's more, I'm confident that I will be doing this for the foreseeable future.'

'If I were asked by another company, similar to Marken and with similar IT issues, which company to use as a managed security provider, I would have no hesitation in recommending Vistorm. I'm impressed by their overall professionalism.'

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