

Hybrid networking underpins successful cloud adoption

Customer name

SAS Global Communications Limited

Business

Managed service provider

Challenge

To underpin customers' cloud migration projects with secure, reliable connectivity to public cloud platforms

Products and services

Colt On Demand Network Solutions

Colt's On Demand solution helps SAS connect a customer's 2,500 users to ERP services running on AWS

When you know that migrating applications from traditional infrastructure to the cloud will deliver significant cost savings to your business, you want to move fast to start benefiting as soon possible.

But when the application you're migrating is the ERP system that's critical to non-stop global business operations, you can't risk making the move unless you can guarantee seamless access to it 24/7.

That was the situation an international food manufacturer found itself in. Having previously hosted all of its applications in-house, the company wanted to transfer its SAP ERP application to the AWS public cloud, and take advantage of the pay-as-you-go charging model.

Having found a specialist that could handle the SAP migration, the manufacturer turned to SAS, its managed network provider. It asked SAS to deliver resilient, high-performance connectivity to SAP in an AWS cloud environment, for its worldwide operations, within a timeframe of just six months.

Cloud migration changes networking needs

SAS, a Colt partner, specialises in designing, implementing and managing customer networks and applications. In particular, it works with customers whose business operations depend on systems being available around the clock.

"Our job is to keep the lights on for our customers," says Mike Stichbury, Sales Director at SAS. "We take a proactive approach to network and application monitoring and management, resolving faults before they impact our customers."

In the past, when customers generally hosted applications and services in their own or third-party data centres, SAS primarily designed and delivered MPLS-based corporate WANs. But now that customers are transforming the way they consume services by migrating them to the cloud, their networking needs are also evolving.

"You can use the internet to access a test environment in the cloud, but

once you take a critical service into production, you have to meet data security requirements and ensure an excellent user experience," says Stichbury. "That's when our customers need direct access to public cloud platforms."

Secure, reliable AWS access delivered at pace

SAS operates out of two data centres: its own in Redhill, Surrey; and Telehouse North in London. At both locations it's connected to multiple carriers, including Colt. "Ever since we first learned about Colt's On Demand solution, we've known it could help us deliver what our customers need," says Stichbury.

Colt's On Demand offering provides fast, reliable, secure private connectivity from enterprise buildings and data centres to AWS and other major cloud service providers (CSPs). Traffic is routed between the data centre and the cloud across Colt's secure, low-latency network, where bandwidth can be scaled up and down in real time.





“Colt makes it easy to provide the secure, high-quality connectivity customers need to realise the full benefits of cloud adoption.”

Mike Stichbury
Sales Director, SAS

“As we were already on net with Colt at both our data centre locations, connecting to Colt’s On Demand service was swift and straightforward, which helped us meet our customer’s challenging migration deadline,” says Stichbury. “Other providers we talked to about direct connection to AWS quoted much longer lead times and far higher costs compared with Colt.”

To connect the manufacturer’s 2,500 users at locations around the world to SAP on AWS, SAS created a hybrid networking solution. SAS uses its Redhill data centre as the interconnection point between the customer’s global WAN and Colt’s service.

“The Colt On Demand service made it easy for us to meet the customer’s requirement for diverse connectivity to the AWS cloud, by enabling connectivity to the manufacturer’s primary AWS instance in Ireland as well as to its backup instance in London,” says Stichbury.

Flexible, scalable, extendable connectivity

Because SAS monitors its customers’ environments in real time, it has visibility into the bandwidth consumed by each application and service, and can therefore size a customer’s initial cloud connection accurately.

“Colt’s On Demand solution is very flexible in terms of both bandwidth and commercials, which helps to reduce risk for our customers,” says Stichbury. “Once the service is in place, we can easily scale it up or down using Colt’s On Demand portal. So no matter how a customer’s usage patterns change, we can maintain performance at the right level. The ability to connect and flex the bandwidth in this way is a unique Colt advantage.”

Having delivered the food manufacturer’s hybrid network in time to support its SAP migration to AWS, SAS can now use Colt to connect customers to other CSPs. The customer has already migrated other services to the Microsoft Azure platform, and connects to them over the same SAS-provided hybrid network. “The beauty of Colt On Demand is that, now we’re connected, we can easily extend access to other clouds, and build solutions for other customers,” says Stichbury. He continues:

“What we’ve delivered for our manufacturing customer is a great example of the hybrid networks customers need as they migrate services to the cloud. Colt makes it easy for us to provide the secure, high-quality connectivity customers need to realise the full benefits of cloud adoption.”

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