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SIKA INTEGRATES 25 COMPANIES OVER 5 YEARS THANKS TO OPEN SYSTEMS' SASE SCALABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

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About Sika Group

Sika is a specialty chemicals company with subsidiaries in 100 countries around the world and manufacturing in over 300 factories. Sika employs more than 25,000 people and generated sales of CHF 8.1 billion in fiscal 2019. The company is growing rapidly, having closed more than 25 acquisitions in the past five years alone.

> "We feel very confident that we are in good hands with Open Systems, now and into the future. We look forward to at least five more years of a productive partnership."

Jürg Siegenthaler, Team Head Network and Server at Sika

THE CHALLENGE

- Provide secure networking for a growing global organization
- Quickly on-board newly acquired companies
- Ensure reliable service, network quality and high performance

THE SOLUTION

- Open Systems' Secure SD-WAN replaces legacy MPLS
- Mission Control NOC as a single point of contact for operations, security, and management of global WAN
- Defined performance levels for the bandwidth and availability of the network

THE RESULT

- Flexible networking allows Sika to go where customers need them to be
- Group companies are able to work together more efficiently
- Smooth acquisition on-boarding enables company growth and new opportunities

A RELATIONSHIP FOR SUCCESS

Sika has relied on Open Systems as its global networking partner since 2004. The two companies' values and principles for customer success are absolutely aligned for mutual benefit. "Sika has had a good experience with Open Systems all these many years," says Jürg Siegenthaler, Team Head Network and Server at Sika. "They have supported us during our growth period. Their strength is that they evolve the service by listening to our needs, which in turn helps Sika serve our customers."

In the early days as well as today, Sika's business objective has been to reduce complexity and risk while simultaneously boosting the quality of global network integration. Open Systems is uniquely able to address Sika's networking needs around the world, even in countries and locations that are considered challenging for other providers. Open Systems' fully managed SASE solution, which includes Secure SD-WAN, is able to support Sika's mix of local networks that use different ISPs and communication links and harmonize them all into a global WAN. It's all supported through Open Systems' global Network Operations Center (NOC) known to customers as Mission Control.

"The services provided by Open Systems are very reliable," says Siegenthaler. "I know this is due to the design of the network. They strive to have a resilient infrastructure for all key locations. Overall, the service availability is very high and very much appreciated by our internal customers."

SERVICE INTEGRATION: SASE BEFORE SASE WAS A TREND

Open Systems' SASE solution is comprehensive, adaptive, and future-proof. It enables Sika to reduce complexity, increase flexibility and improve operations with a single platform that includes a cloud-based core network, fully integrated security, a high level of automation, and 24x7 expert level support – all delivered as a service.

"The integration of all the services is very important to us," says Siegenthaler. "Other providers' strategies require buying best-of-breed solutions from different vendors, especially related to security, and stacking them together. We very much prefer the Open Systems approach where they integrate the various solutions for us."

Security is a critical function for Sika in all its businesses. Open Systems meets those needs with a comprehensive security stack across its platform, including a firewall, email gateway, secure web gateway, DNS filter, unified threat protection, network detection and response (NDR), and endpoint detection and response (EDR). The stack is a well-integrated mix of homegrown and commercial software that operates across the entire global network.

OPEN SYSTEMS ENABLES SIKA'S GROWTH STRATEGY

Even as Sika acquires new companies and brings them onto the global network, the transition is smooth. Each acquired company has its own legacy network that must be sustained through a phased migration process.

"The firewall capabilities on our network's security gateway allow us to segment the acquired company for as long as they are not on the same security posture as the rest of Sika Group," says Siegenthaler. "We create so-called transfer networks to interconnect with their network. Initially we only open certain ports. We basically use the firewall to connect from the legacy network to the Sika network. As the security posture of the acquired company increases, we gradually open the connectivity towards our network. This helps us put the migration process through a phased approach and simplifies the integration of such companies into our IT environment."

Oftentimes with other networking vendors, obtaining support for such challenging global operations can be a hassle. Not so, for Sika, as support is a highlight of the services Open Systems provides. "Mission Control gives us direct access to Open Systems' high-level engineers," says Siegenthaler. "I've worked before with other well-known global service providers. Typically, when you call them for help, you get a first-level support person on the phone who can't do anything. All they do is dispatch the problem to the correct team and then the customer has to wait. With Open Systems, there is a level-3 engineer taking the call who can immediately solve the problem. This is a real differentiator for Open Systems."