

Case Reference: Keeping Africa moving

Secure remote access, from anywhere at any time

Out of band management

About the client

The client is a downstream petroleum company serving 23 countries across North, West, East, and Southern Africa. Its operations include supply, storage, distribution and retail of a range of petroleum products through a network of over 2,000 service stations.

“Viadex has deep experience in serving the technology needs of businesses in Africa, and has a strong local presence in the region. For the client to see the rationale on paper (the PoC) was one thing, however seeing it in action is essential.”

Business Challenge - Central access for joined-up efficiencies

The vast geographic spread of the client's operations places considerable pressure on its ability to control its IT estate in a consistent, coordinated, and confident fashion. A stable remote solution is essential for secure out of band management; providing centralised access to physical hardware.

What did they seek from Viadex?

The client was aware that its diverse estate could be a potential breeding ground for single points of failure (SPOFs); weak links in the chain. The problem was in knowing where these points might be on a daily basis. The client was looking for this insight from Viadex, together with a robust plan to deal with them when and if they arose.

Each location had some remote hands, but console access was critical, particularly when it came to handling backup configuration files and uploading new files.

The desired outcome was to be able to provide secure remote access from different locations that could function independently of the services provided by the Internet Service Providers serving the local sites.

The Viadex Solution: Staying on-course when off-line

Viadex deployed OpenGear for the out of band management to provide secure access to the physical hardware over IP, using the built-in Layer 2 switch, and console connections through standard CAT5/CAT6 cables.

Secure HTML logins to the OpenGear graphical user interface could be configured on the built-in firewall, using access rules – based on inbound public facing IP addresses, for example – and ensuring secure locations for file uploads over SSH (Secure Shell) to the file transfer protocol (FTP) service running on the OpenGear appliance.

Given that each ISP service could be considered a SPOF, the OpenGear devices provide SIM-based access. This can be through a standard consumer-based SIM, or a Private APN for added security. Viadex recommended a Private APN to ensure that the on-premise physical servers, switches and firewalls could still be accessed and managed even if the ISPs went off-line.

Results: Keeping the business flowing

- **Local service for global impact:** Viadex has deep experience in serving the technology needs of businesses in Africa, and has a strong local presence in the region. For the client to see the rationale on paper (the PoC) was one thing, however seeing it in action is essential.
- **Test drive the solution:** To make this possible, Viadex gave the client access to test hardware, to securely connect to Viadex's build centre from Africa and upload configuration files to the secure location on the appliances over SSH. These were then applied to HPE switches, Cisco switches and FortiGate firewalls using console connections from the OpenGear solution.
- **Secure the future:** Tests were completed over a Private APN to the SIM cards in the appliances to test security, functionality and performance. The client now has confidence in its systems, knowing that a single point of failure will only ever be that: single. It has best practice in place to cope with the worst scenarios.



AUDIT



DESIGN



DEPLOY



OPTIMISE