



Kiabi Counts on Forcepoint to Help Protect Its Off-The-Rack Fashion Empire

The French discount clothing retailer safeguards its global network of stores and offices with Forcepoint Next Generation Firewall.

Kiabi oversees more than 450 fully owned and franchised stores around the world, as well as operating offices, warehouses, and e-tail websites like kiabi.com. Linking all of those properties securely is key to Kiabi's success, especially when it comes to providing award-winning customer service for its brick-and-mortar and online customers. The Hem, France-based company relies on Forcepoint NGFW with SD-WAN capabilities to secure its global IT network and enable quicker, more affordable SD-WAN connectivity solutions to bring new locations online.

CUSTOMER PROFILE:

Kiabi is a global clothing retailer bringing quality fashion to customers at affordable prices.

INDUSTRY:

Retail

HQ COUNTRY:

France

PRODUCT:

Forcepoint NGFW

Kiabi helped revolutionize the apparel industry with its innovative approach to making designer-inspired fashion affordable for the average consumer. Founded in 1978 by Patrick Mulliez, Kiabi has remained a family-run company even as it has expanded from a single shop in Roncq, France to more than 450 fully owned and franchised outlets all over the globe. Through it all, the company has constantly embraced business efficiencies that allow it to sell fashionable clothing at affordable prices to its customers.

These days, Kiabi is finding its greatest efficiencies through technology, and more specifically, via the gains it has achieved through a digital transformation of its business operations. The clothing retailer's IT team headed by CTO Anthony Pierson in Lille, France manages a network connecting stores, offices, and warehouses around the world. Keeping that network secure is where Forcepoint Next Generation Firewall (NGFW) comes in.

Smoothing out the differences in a global IT network with SD-WAN

Kiabi is now in the later stages of a major digital transformation to better compete in a challenging global market for affordable retail apparel. The retailer has hundreds of physical stores in France and its overseas territories, as well as dozens more franchised outlets in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Each of those locations is a little bit or even a lot different in terms of connectivity and telecom prices, so Kiabi wanted a network security solution that could assist in smoothing out those differences for more consistent network performance and to bring down costs, Pierson said.

The French retailer had some other network security goals. Kiabi also wanted:

- A unified, centrally manageable network security solution
- To 'future proof' its network in anticipation of increased security needs
- The ability to comply with different data privacy regulations in different markets

The approach Kiabi settled on was to build a Software-Defined Wide Area Network (SD-WAN) for its global retail empire. SD-WAN is a networking technology that uses software to make wide area networks more cost-effective and flexible than ones that rely only on Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) by connecting different geographical sites directly to the internet over whichever commodity broadband links are most appropriate and dependable in each location. Configurations and access policies on SD-WANs are centrally managed and easily applied across all sites, removing the need to manually administer each WAN device regularly.

SD-WAN started as a solution used mainly by small- to mid-sized businesses to get remote sites connected without the historic costs and delays of MPLS leased lines. But over time, SD-WAN has been embraced by enterprises as well, particularly as the securing of such networks has come to be as robust as the operational efficiency advantages they offer.

"We are a fast-growing company and we need to bring new stores online as quickly and as cost-effectively as possible. SD-WAN gives us that agility—it is very helpful for quickly delivering a connection between our data centers, our headquarters, and our stores. It offers better latency and better costs overall," Pierson said.

"We have had a very long and productive partnership with Forcepoint and thanks to Forcepoint NGFW firewalls, we are able to connect our new stores very quickly and save some money doing it. The relationship has provided a great return on investment just in terms of efficiency and savings on operating costs."



Challenges

- Secure a global SD-WAN connecting more than 450 remote locations
- Maintain consistent network service in different geographies.
- Centralize management and control of network.



Approach

- Deploy 1,000 Forcepoint NGFW on-premise appliances to Kiabi remote locations.

Forcepoint NGFW is just what the network doctor ordered

Securing an SD-WAN on the scale of Kiabi's required a network security solution built specifically for that purpose. Forcepoint's network security products combine the latest in SD-WAN connectivity with the industry's top-rated NGFW security, all managed at enterprise scale from a single policy-based console. It is used by organizations of all sizes in retail, hospitality, and financial services around the globe.

Kiabi has deployed 1,000 Forcepoint NGFW on-premise appliances to its global locations, leveraging the core NGFW "clustering" features and SD-WAN capabilities to create a unified, centrally manageable network security solution, reduce telecom bills, overcome connectivity issues, and create a quicker, more cost-effective path to bringing new sites online.

Pierson said that Forcepoint NGFW's central management capabilities and firewall clustering efficiencies have made it easier to roll out upgrades and to create and adapt rules than is possible with rival firewall products.

Forcepoint NGFW has also helped Kiabi improve network uptime and resilience, protect its remote sites from internet-based phishing and malware attacks, and accelerate the performance of cloud apps.

In the long term, Kiabi anticipates taking on new liabilities as it extends its network security perimeter to include franchisees that currently run their own data security operations. The company will be depending on Forcepoint to assist when that happens.

"Right now, we don't share all of our customer data with our franchisees. But in the coming years, we plan to extend our loyalty program to more of these franchise stores, which means we'll need to partner with them on security and compliance.

We think Forcepoint NGFW has helped us to futureproof that scenario on the network side of things," Pierson said.

Tackling new compliance requirements in Russia

Kiabi's recent expansion into Russia, where the company now operates multiple brick-and-mortar stores, has challenged Pierson's team with new data protection regulations that required help from Forcepoint to navigate. Russian federal law requires all data operators processing data of Russian citizens, whether collected online or offline, to process that personal data in databases located within the territory of the Russian Federation.

This means that Kiabi must comply with the law by performing all computing operations involving Russian customer data locally, which the company does through an infrastructure-as-a-service deal with Russian internet company Yandex. Kiabi's Yandex account also hosts Forcepoint NGFW software that acts as a bridge connecting the cloud-hosted Russian customer data with the retailer's data centers in France.

"We have to be compliant with the Russian law regarding personal data, so we set up this infrastructure-as-a-service in the Russian cloud with Forcepoint's software. But we also have to be compliant with industry regulations like PCI-DSS in every store. And we have our core security concerns like maintaining a wall between guest WiFi and corporate WiFi," Pierson said.

"We use Forcepoint's NGFW clusters in all of our stores and they do the job. We have a very strong relationship with Forcepoint and trust their products and their team completely."

Forcepoint NGFW has ticked off all the boxes Kiabi wanted from its network security solution, leaving the pioneering retailer to do what it does best—bring hip, quality fashion to its customers at prices everyone can afford.



Results

- › Integrated SD-WAN configuration and monitoring.
- › Centralized management with real-time visibility and drag-and-drop configuration makes policy changes, upgrades easier.
- › Network uptime and resilience improved.
- › Application-based traffic prioritization "that actually works".
- › Strong IPS protection.
- › Integration of Quality of Service (QoS) controls into security policies.