



# AMPLIFON



## BRINGING SOUND TO LIFE

Established in Italy in the 1950s, Amplifon is the global leader in hearing solutions and services for retail expertise, customization and consumer care. Headquartered in Milan, Amplifon is known for its innovation and unique business model, having grown from a small business founded in the aftermath of the Second World War to a multi-national enterprise operating today across 22 countries and 5 continents.

## AMPLIFON'S NETWORK CHALLENGES

Amplifon has pursued an aggressive expansion strategy since 1998, acquiring major competitors in Switzerland, France, United States and the Netherlands. In 2002, so as to facilitate this acquisitive approach, the company embarked upon a consolidation programme in order to centralize its IT and network operations. In parallel, a range of changes to its business model and a complete re-positioning of its brand led to significant changes to operating structures across Europe. This in turn drove a consolidation of data centers and core applications.

In particular, it became apparent that Amplifon's existing IT infrastructure and procurement processes were insufficient for supporting the company's ongoing expansion program. The current model saw the company with multiple networks from disparate providers using a range of different technologies which exposed retail outlets and corporate offices to unacceptable IT and operational risks.

Individual countries within the Amplifon organization buying and managing isolated networks from separate providers was seen as overly complex and carried too much risk as the business sought to extend its global footprint.

Amplifon needed to:

- Increase standardization and control
- Reduce operational risk
- Reduce complexity and internal inefficiency
- Improve return on investment through eradication of duplicate or excess infrastructure

From the network the objective was simple: to create a fast, resilient and reliable infrastructure that could better support the commercial and operational demands of a growing and dynamic business.

## BENEFITS TO AMPLIFON

- Vastly reduced complexity & a single partner accountable for end-to-end network issues
- Strong Value-for-money through the use of low-cost infrastructure & an active sourcing model
- Agile connectivity solutions keep the network in sync with the dynamically changing retail environment
- GCX's customer focus is aligned to Amplifon's corporate philosophy

## GCX PRODUCT & SERVICES

- **Managed MPLS VPN**
  - Fully-integrated GCX & 3rd party MPLS
  - End-to-end Managed Service & SLAs
- **Hybrid VPN**
  - xDSL, Cable, wireless access into MPLS with IPSec encryption
- **WAN Xtra Deliver**
  - Fully-integrated 3G/4G connectivity with IPSec encryption for rapid deployment
- **X-Shield Managed Security**
  - Managed firewall
- **Managed WiFi**

With the diversity of business needs that such a global organization faces, maintaining a seamless global communications platform that meets the needs of every site in every country is very challenging

## A COST-EFFECTIVE AND SCALABLE PLATFORM FIT FOR A DYNAMIC RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

Following an open and thorough process evaluation process, GCX was selected in 2002 to provide a managed WAN solution using managed Hybrid VPN with IPSec to connect Amplifon's European headquarters, its regional offices and 300 retail stores in Italy.

Since then the platform has grown with more than 2,000 retail outlets across Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, UK, France, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, US, Germany, Hungary, Australia, India and New Zealand connected using a combination of Managed Hybrid VPN and Managed MPLS VPN; evolving over time to always remain in line with Amplifon's changing needs. And to enable Amplifon concentrate on doing what it does best, GCX provides a full managed service, acting as a single point of contact from implementation all the way through to billing.

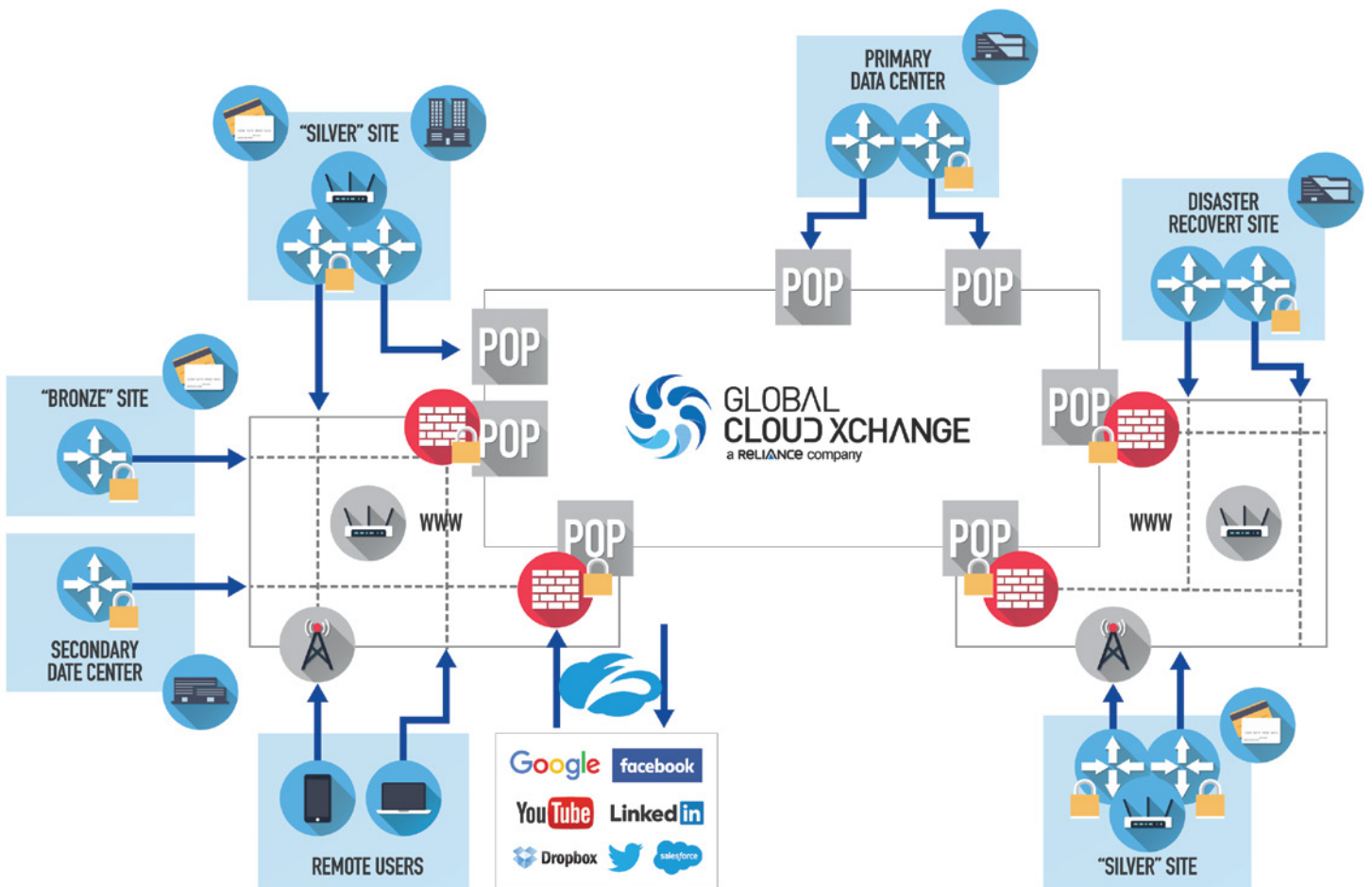
The commercially-optimized solution supports use of a centralized ERP application (hosted in major data centres across the globe) as well as managed video conferencing and voice over IP services. The solution sees GCX integrate a variety of technologies and services from infrastructure

providers around the world into a single end-to-end network backed by an expert managed service and stringent SLAs.

To make the solution highly scalable and repeatable, site design and configuration is based upon a "bundle" approach.

- Stores connect via Hybrid VPN (xDSL and 4G / 3G Internet with IPSec encryption into the GCX MPLS network) giving an optimal blend of cost-efficiency and service reliability
- Corporate headquarters, regional offices and centralized data centers throughout Europe, Asia and the US connect directly to GCX's MPLS network using a combination of Ethernet and SDH access circuits for resilience and scale

GCX manages the local infrastructure providers in each country in such a way as to ensure the appropriate level of redundancy at the same time as maintaining access to a range of technologies and services that will allow the network to scale as the business continues to grow.



Amplifon has placed its trust in GCX for the provision and management of its global networking needs since 2002, renewing its commitment several times over

As is characteristic of the retail industry, Amplifon often needs to connect a new or refurbished store with minimal notice. WAN Xtra allows new stores to be connected temporarily to the network within days through a fully-integrated 4G / 3G Hybrid VPN connection.

And as roaming staff move from store to store in key markets, they can connect seamlessly to the Amplifon corporate network via a GCX-Managed WiFi device, regardless of whether they are connecting a laptop, tablet or smartphone.

Finally, to provide maximum protection to the solution, GCX provides for a range of managed security services from its X-Shield portfolio including Managed Firewalls at five data centers in Italy, the USA, Australia and New Zealand, and Cloud-Based Secure Web Gateway allowing 6,000 Amplifon users to browse the Internet.



## BENEFITS TO AMPLIFON

Amplifon values working with a single global managed services provider; especially one capable of meeting its complex needs in a wide range of geographies with a cohesive and fully integrated managed solution.

Through GCX, Amplifon enjoys the advantages of a multi-technology, multi-infrastructure network service whilst retaining a single relationship globally for every aspect of the solution. Given that the solution is backed by a comprehensive range of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) which reflect the different services and business requirements at each site, Amplifon can operate with the peace-of-mind that its global communication needs are in good hands.

The Managed Hybrid VPN provided by GCX addresses the specific needs of the Amplifon business – in this case ensuring almost 2,000 high street

retail outlets connect via fast, reliable and yet cost effective means, while data centers, corporate HQ and regional offices can connect to a high-performance global backbone network through high bandwidth MPLS and Ethernet services.

Finally, thanks to WAN Xtra, the network no longer acts as a barrier within the business. Now instead Amplifon's IT department has the agility and flexibility to respond to the demands of a dynamic retail environment with "rapid deployment" network services available anywhere in the world.

Amplifon's stated corporate philosophy is: "Satisfaction of our customers is at the center of our work" and Global Cloud Xchange's customer-focused strategy is a key enabler of this.

## FEATURES OF GCX SOLUTION

GCX provides Amplifon with a highly complex, dynamic communications platform:

- Connects more than 2,000 retail stores in 14 countries and corporate, regional and in-country offices and data centers to an integrated high performance global backbone network
- Uses connectivity from a range of best-of-breed local and regional carriers to meeting numerous, often site-specific requirements
- Underlying network infrastructure selected according to individual site needs
  - Hybrid VPN with IPSec
  - Managed MPLS VPN
- X-Shield Managed Firewall
- WAN Xtra Deliver rapid deployment solution enables Amplifon to bring new stores onto the network in days to match the dynamic retail environment
- Managed WiFi extends the Amplifon corporate network seamlessly for roaming users

The solution is backed by an expert managed service

- Single point of contact for all network and security related services regardless of the underlying carrier at each location
- End-to-end SLA covering all services
- Fully consolidated billing across the network irrespective of the number of underlying carriers
- Network performance transparency provided through O-zone, GCX's real-time online service delivery performance and reporting portal
- Active ongoing procurement process to continually identify most appropriate technologies and drive down cost
- A dedicated "Customer Advocacy Team" with deep knowledge of the Amplifon services and design resolving network incidents more effectively and ensuring proactive monitoring resulting in better user experience and satisfaction in the different regions

## ABOUT GLOBAL CLOUD XCHANGE

GCX's approach to Managed MPLS VPN provides our customers with the optimum solution for their business needs through a hybrid approach of using our far-reaching privately-owned Global Network, supplemented extensively with 3rd party infrastructure deployed through Virtual Network Operator ("VNO") principles. By selecting and integrating the most appropriate service and technology available in every region and for each location type (irrespective of whether the service is on-net or off-net) GCX gives its customers the broadest choice and flexibility available in the global market place. What's more, where required, our solutions are delivered and assured by an end-to-end managed service, guaranteeing business outcomes.

