

SPITFIRE - CASTING AN EYE OVER NETWORK RESILIENCE AND SECURITY

CASTINGS P.L.C.

Castings P.L.C. is a market leading iron casting and machining group based in the UK, supplying both the domestic and export markets.

The original foundry operation dates back to 1835 and today the group comprises three trading businesses, employing over 1,000 people in the UK.

The group produces Ductile iron, SG iron, Austempered ductile iron (ADI), SiMo and Ni-resist castings up to 45kg in weight. The group's four Disamatic moulding machines and three horizontal green sand moulding machines provide a foundry capacity of 70,000 tonnes per annum.

Background

Castings P.L.C. has been a customer of Spitfire Network Services (Spitfire) for 12-years, who has provided internet services since the start of the partnership.

In 2017, Castings P.L.C tasked Spitfire with bringing its security and connectivity in-house for their other sites, after previously outsourcing it. The group operates across three sites and sought a consolidated single solution that was easy to manage.



Billy Drew,
Group IT Manager
Castings P.L.C.

Spitfire recommended and installed an MPLS (Multi Protocol Label Switching) comprised of resilient Ethernet connectivity at each site and centralised hosted high availability Firewalls, which met the needs of Castings P.L.C for a robust and cost-effective solution for data connectivity.

Following this deployment, the relationship between Castings P.L.C and Spitfire has gotten closer, developed, and grown.

Challenge

In 2022, Castings P.L.C faced a new challenge - this time regarding firewalls.

Across the group, there are over a thousand devices/users in use. The operation is 24/7, so always-on connectivity is pivotal and access to data is needed 24/7. Equipment on the shop floor, including 20 robots as part of the foundry and castings facilities, communicates across the group. This includes temperature monitoring, sand testing, machine monitoring to see if they are working properly - a huge amount of data that is at the heart of Castings P.L.C.

"Maintaining connectivity and ensuring we are always-on 24/7 is so critical for our operations, and that's exactly what Spitfire's solutions enable us to do."

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With the flow of data so important, minutes of downtime can be incredibly disruptive and cost the group thousands of pounds.

Initially, Castings P.L.C purchased and managed their own high availability Firewalls hosted within Spitfire's core on the edge of their MPLS. However, with limited internal knowledge and time to manage them, difficulties began to arise, resulting in employees experiencing a growing number of issues and consequently reporting tickets to the IT team.

Solution

Spitfire developed a bespoke suite of solutions for Castings P.L.C - with the sole objective of reducing connectivity downtime.

Working in parallel with resilient Dedicated Fibre Ethernet within an MPLS network, Spitfire's Firewall as a Service (FWaaS) provides Castings P.L.C with a fully managed service to secure its network perimeter. Utilising Fortinet's Fortigate Firewall Security and Unified Threat Management platform, Spitfire's FWaaS offers threat protection underpinned by Spitfire's business grade network and support services.

With the reduction of downtime, a key element to address for Castings P.L.C, Spitfire's FWaaS is the most effective method of protecting the group's network from internet borne threats. All network traffic that passes through the firewall is analysed and checked against complex parameters to identify any cyber security risks including hacks, DDoS, viruses, and botnets. Spitfire's FWaaS acts as a line of defence for Castings P.L.C, and ensures operations aren't affected by malicious actors. Furthermore, this allowed Castings P.L.C to consolidate their reliance for on premise equipment as they were able to remove hardware which was previously providing web filtering.

"Our relationship with Spitfire has always been really good, and the support they offer is exactly what we need. We've never had any issues with Spitfire and we're really happy with the service."



"With Spitfire's Firewall as a Service, it's the ease of access and how simple it has been to set up. I haven't got to manage my data anymore - it's managed for me. It means I can focus on other critical IT projects across the group. They have a no-nonsense approach to solving problems for us, which is what we like."

In addition, the "as-a-Service" model means Castings P.L.C can benefit from an advanced feature set backed by 24/7 technical support at a fraction of the cost of deploying an equivalent dedicated on-premise solution at each site. It also enables Castings P.L.C's IT team to focus on other IT projects across the group.

Results

Since the installation of Spitfire's FWaaS, the impact for Castings P.L.C has been transformational. After 3-months, there have been no issues whatsoever, which in turn has meant there has been zero downtime across the group. Connectivity has been maintained and the group has increased overall productivity.

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