

P&O gains competitive edge with SonicWall Aventail

Using SRA EX7000, Pacific & Orient Insurance Company Berhad secures mobility for insurance agents



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Joe Liew
Senior Manager

Customer profile



Company	Pacific & Orient Insurance Company Berhad
Industry	Insurance
Country	Malaysia
Employees	400
Website	www.pacific-orient.com

Challenge

- Reliability and availability
- Customer support
- Security and ease of management

Solution

The solution that P&O chose to establish consistent and reliable remote access for its insurance agents is SonicWall's robust SSL VPN platform.

Benefits

- Significant reduction in support calls
- Higher business revenue
- Increased business opportunities

Pacific & Orient Insurance Company Berhad (P&O) is one of Malaysia's biggest and most established insurers in the motor segment. The company operates a network of about 1,700 agents throughout peninsula Malaysia, with support from more than 400 personnel at its various branch offices. P&O has enhanced its competitive edge for its distributed organization using the SonicWall™ Aventail™ E-Class Secure Remote Access (SRA) EX7000 appliance.

“We can now enjoy a complete remote access solution without escalating infrastructure costs or complexity. At the same time, we can set corporate policies for each remote user to access specific applications and resources.”

Joe Liew
Senior Manager

SonicWall Aventail E-Class SRA EX7000 appliance provides P&O agents with secure remote access to mission-critical applications and resources in P&O's Insurance Portal, thereby increasing employee productivity and reducing IT overhead and total cost of ownership.

Today's mobile workforce is demanding secure access to more resources from more remote devices and platforms than ever before.

Moreover, competition is stiff in this industry, particularly since appointed agents have the choice of registering and submitting insurance policies with any insurance company. To differentiate itself from its rivals, P&O turned to leading-edge network architecture to provide a hassle-free experience to agents using its online portal. This move has captured the loyalty of appointed agents as well as recurring business.

Being the only company in its market segment empowered by a state-of-the-art computing environment, P&O has amply demonstrated how an information-age company sets the stage for the future.

The challenge: unreliable network access and absence of access management

P&O's pain points of the past can be traced to its old remote access solution. Agents who submitted and renewed policies via its insurance portal were dogged by problematic and unreliable connectivity. P&O needed a system that

is available and accessible round-the-clock 365 days a year to minimize costly downtime. The connectivity problem also consumed higher IT resources due to a high volume of support calls.

At the same time, system administrators did not have a simple way to configure different levels of access for different groups of users. “We had no visibility over who accessed what sites and if sensitive information is being extracted without proper approval. We also needed to ensure information is secured over the Internet,” said Mr. Joe Liew, Senior Manager of Pacific & Orient Technologies Sdn. Bhd.

“Our extensive network of agents is a key pillar of P&O Insurance's success as an efficient service provider that prides itself in being ever ready to listen and solve problems on all insurance matters involving customers,” added Mr. Liew. “A secure, efficient and robust linkage between our agents' offices and our head office's main computer systems is, therefore, critical.”

The result: minimum downtime, granular access and better competitive edge

“After evaluating several solutions, we found that the SonicWall Aventail E-Class Secure Remote Access solution is the most simple to deploy and manage,” says Liew.

At the heart of the solution is the E-Class SRA EX7000 appliance which provides the agents with secure remote

access to mission-critical applications and resources in P&O's insurance portal. The SSL VPN solution creates a consistent "in-office" experience for agents even when they access web and client-server applications and printers over wired and wireless networks from their mobile devices and PDAs.

Now, all the agents need to be productive anywhere and anytime is Aventail Connect – a lightweight client that can be pre-installed on their IT-managed device or downloaded from a web portal.

For IT administrators, management overhead is low due to granular control and tools for ease of management. Coupled with the SonicWall Aventail Smart Access technology, Connect automatically determines and deploys the right remote access method for the corporate resources that each agent needs, based on policy.

Facing stiff competition in this industry, the company continues to seek new and innovative ways to keep the loyalty of its 1,700 appointed agents and to attract new ones. While high-quality user support and user satisfaction has helped P&O to lead the industry, the company plans to maintain that level of excellence cost-effectively and efficiently.

A platform feature that has significantly helped P&O in supporting its base of insurance agents effectively is the SonicWall Virtual Assist. Without having to visit the agent, support staff simply use Virtual Assist to access the agent's computer remotely and diagnose and fix problems quickly. The improved customer service and resolution time translates to improved agent productivity.

To prevent unauthorized access to the agent's system, the identity of the support staff is confirmed through proven LDAP, AD, NT Domain, RADIUS, RSA, VASCO or one-time password authentication infrastructure. More important for P&O as a financial service provider, the 256-bit AES SSL encryption securing the support sessions complies with internal and external regulations such as Sarbanes-Oxley and HIPAA. Yet another cost-saving benefit is that Virtual Assist enables trainers and support staff to remotely train agents to use programs and tools.

The bottom-line for P&O is that it now satisfies its agents with hassle-free remote access connectivity and resolves technical problems efficiently. By tapping on existing resources, P&O has also achieved a much higher level of satisfaction with low operational costs.

"The great thing about the SonicWall Aventail E-Class SSL VPN is that it is web-based and does not require our administrators to preinstall a 'fat' client on each agent's remote workstation."

Joe Liew
Senior Manager

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