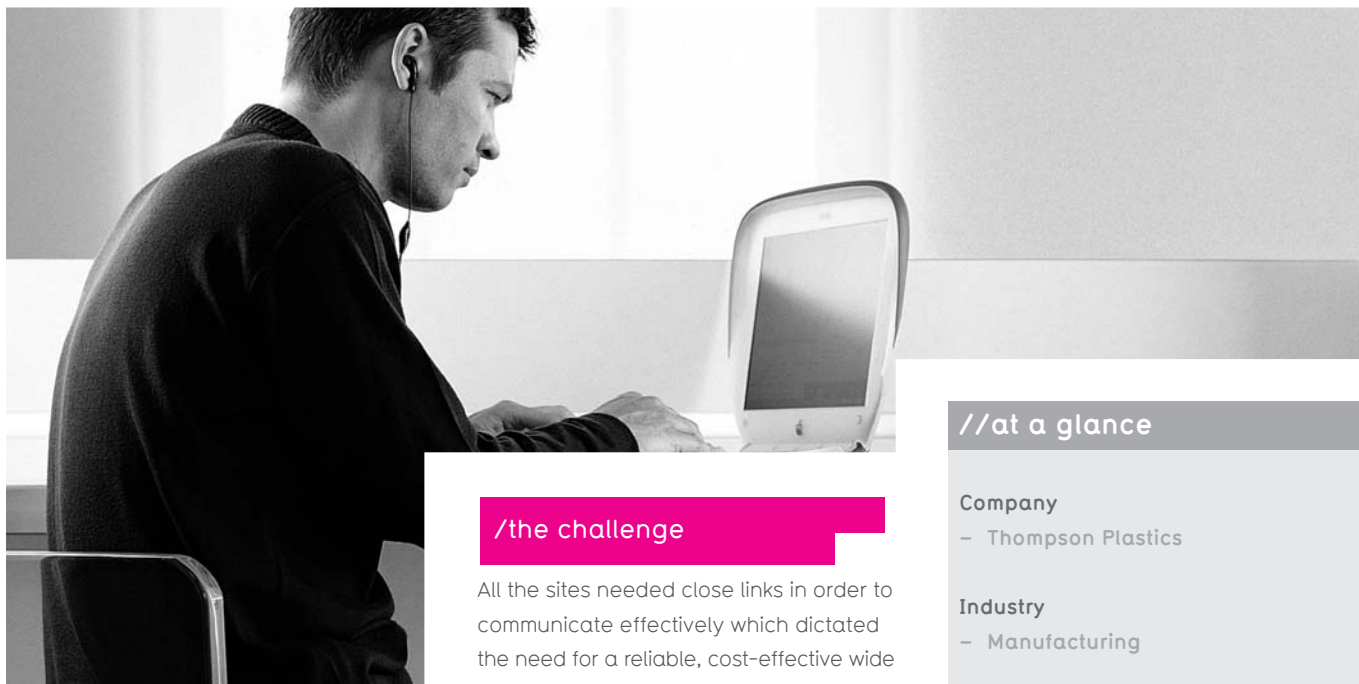


# Case Study

## / Thompson Plastics



### /the customer

Thompson Plastics is the UK's leading manufacturer of thermoformed plastic components for touring caravans, bathrooms, forklifts, agricultural vehicles and signs. The Thompson Plastics Group has a turnover in excess of £30million, is headquartered in Hessle, Humberside and has manufacturing sites spread across the UK in Bridgend, South Wales, Crewe, Manchester and Co. Durham.

The Group employs a small centrally-based IT department, so needed a communications company which could provide second-to-none network support services above and beyond those provided by their local service provider. The team could then focus on proactive work rather than fire-fighting connection problems between various suppliers. The Group also needed a provider that could expand their network as the company grew to meet the demands of the remote manufacturing plants instead of simply adding further leased line and broadband connections.

### /the challenge

All the sites needed close links in order to communicate effectively which dictated the need for a reliable, cost-effective wide area network (WAN) to the headquarter's IT department. The previous WAN was unreliable with a mixture of leased lines and broadband virtual private network connections from different suppliers.

The main challenge was the time taken to update the order books, often taking a whole day once a week because of the unreliable network connection. With approximately 200 PC users and 80 ERP system users, the unreliable connection also affected access to centralised email, printers and computer aided design (CAD) systems.

This mixed infrastructure meant that the systems were difficult to manage. With several providers and no service level agreements (SLA) in place, the reliability of the connection and timings for any necessary downtime were not guaranteed. Problems were not resolved but passed between providers, with no-one taking responsibility.

Because Thompson Plastics is located in an area traditionally serviced by one supplier, it was not only difficult for them to rely on a consistent service level but there was little room for negotiation on cost.

### //at a glance

#### Company

– Thompson Plastics

#### Industry

– Manufacturing

#### Vi@tel Solution

– VPN network between 3 locations with a managed leased line to a further location.

#### Key Benefits

- Reliable 'always-on' network connection
- Network costs reduced by half
- Bandwidth increased
- Management support services
- Productivity doubled

"The move has certainly paid off as not only have we cut our network costs by half we also have all the additional management support services on top which we didn't get before. Vi@tel provides a great reliable service and support exactly when we need it."

David Patterson, IT Manager,  
Thompson Plastics





## /the solution

Viatel put in place an MPLS IPVPN\* between Hesse, Crewe, Co. Durham and Bridgend and a managed leased line to Manchester. This was the best solution for the sites and all links were up in six months.

The Viatel management services gave Thompson Plastics the network support they needed to ensure good communications between the sites. Viatel also committed to a comprehensive service level agreement.

"We needed to move away from the traditional WAN provision of leased line services from local telecom providers. We had no support and recently when a fire occurred it knocked out the leased lines in Manchester and as a result major disruption occurred at the factory. Users could not access the main ERP and email systems for more than three days whilst BT repaired the leased line." said David Patterson, IT Manager, Thompson Plastics.

"Viatel solved the problems around connection reliability and outages, quickly demonstrating their ability to provide us with a flexible and robust network to support our growing needs, as well as providing the management services on top, leaving our IT personnel free to do their jobs."



## /the benefits

The resulting reliable performance of the network has produced efficiencies in day-to-day processing, less downtime and far fewer support issues. In addition, Viatel provides service and performance level guarantees, so any problems are dealt with quickly.

The main challenge of reducing the time taken to update the order book has been achieved. It now takes a maximum of three hours a week to enter the sales orders compared with a whole day using the previous network. Parts are ordered much more effectively and the 'always-on' connection enables the operators to book orders reliably without constant breaks in service and having to re-enter lost details.

In addition, networks costs for the Manchester office have been reduced by a third, whilst the bandwidth has doubled and the reliability of access to email, printing and CAD have been greatly improved. This increased bandwidth has also allowed Thompson Plastics to provide up to 10 remote laptop users with secure and reliable access.

"It was a bright move on our part to implement Viatel's network. It was a big leap of faith to use someone else as the providers in our area have something of a monopoly and it has always been the belief that as an SME we couldn't afford to go elsewhere."

Thompson Plastics is currently discussing moving its voice services to Viatel's offering in order to further increase cost savings and enhanced management capabilities.

## /about us

Viatel provides business communications services to companies of all sizes across Europe. We think differently at Viatel. We listen to our customers, make a point of understanding their needs, and deliver a service that is right for them, not most convenient for us. We have been in this market since 1991 and we are here to stay.

## /want to know more?

To find out more about Viatel services, please contact one of our team or visit our website at [www.viatel.com](http://www.viatel.com)

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Your feedback matters, so if you have any questions, comments or suggestions please email us at [info@viatel.com](mailto:info@viatel.com)

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