



Otsuka's Trapeze act creates a united Europe with LAN2LAN

"In this industry, technology makes a significant difference to the successful delivery of projects and the ability to innovate..."

Ali Khan, IT Manager, Otsuka

Background

The Japanese phrase Otsuka literally means Major ('Oh') Milestone ('tsu'ka'). It is a concept that has driven the growth of the pharmaceuticals giant since it was established in 1921. So when Ali Khan was appointed IT Manager for the Group's European Operation in 2008, he lost no time in taking some significant steps forward of his own. He has been systematically refreshing the company's international IT infrastructure, including the introduction of a unifying Wi-Fi deployment, based on Trapeze technology from LAN2LAN.

The Challenge: Time-to-market

Otsuka Europe was established in 1982 with the opening of the Frankfurt Institute in Germany. The company has sales and marketing operations in France, Germany, Italy, Scandinavia, Spain and the UK, all supported by the regional office of Otsuka Pharmaceutical Europe Limited, based in Uxbridge, to the west of London.

In 2008, Otsuka Europe spent €630 million on research and development, with a strong focus on addressing less mainstream areas of pharmaceutical research. The company has a specialist capability in treatments for disorders affecting the cardiovascular, gastro-intestinal and central nervous systems.

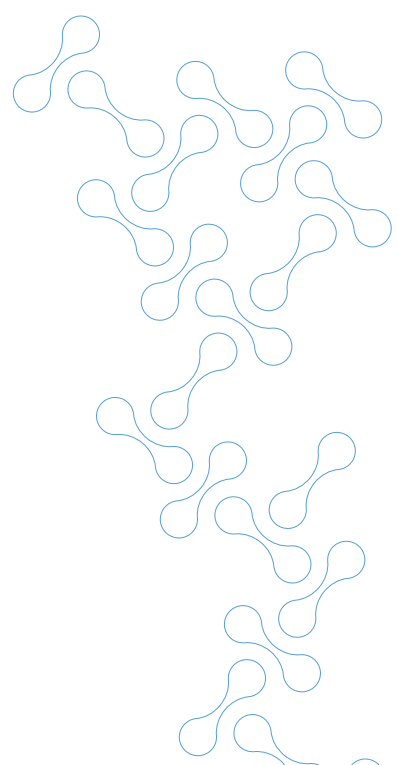
The IT infrastructure extends across a total of 26 separate European sites, with scientists, researchers, business development teams and senior decision-makers travelling regularly between them. However, when Ali Khan arrived in 2008, he found that many elements of the network were approaching the logical and physical ends of their working lives.

"Time-to-market is one of the most important competitive issues in this industry," he says, "which makes technology one of the primary drivers of competitive advantage. The faster information moves around the organisation, the faster we can get new treatments into the market.

"With the infrastructure becoming outdated, our research teams were getting significantly handicapped by the inflexibility of the technology."

Like many organisations with multiple sites, one of the major obstacles to efficient networking was the inconsistency of standards between the individual locations. Growth by acquisition and merger, as well as by opening new offices, had created an infrastructure where different hardware and software platforms were used in different countries.

Says Ali Khan: "Someone travelling between different offices may have had no trouble connecting to the network in one country, but would really struggle when they arrived at their next destination. In this scenario, you can rapidly accumulate many hours of unproductive time, which can be critical to the success of a research and development project."



Ali Khan set the goal of a unified, centrally-managed network, using Wi-Fi technology to allow freedom of movement and seamless, secure connections wherever people were working within the organisation. He turned to LAN2LAN for a solution.

The Solution: Trapeze Wi-Fi

A Trapeze Wi-Fi deployment, in conjunction with Watchguard VPN, has given Ali Khan the service delivery solution he needs. In particular, running a Trapeze virtual cluster in high-availability mode ensures maximum system uptime. Overall, the Trapeze architecture provides the flexibility and ease of management to allow a unified deployment across the organisation, all controlled from the headquarters in Uxbridge.

The RingMaster® WLAN management suite allows remote management of the access points at each site, through a familiar SNMP graphical interface. The system integrated smoothly with the existing infrastructure and Ali Khan and his colleagues quickly got to grips with the finer points of Trapeze Wi-Fi management.

“We deliver crucial productivity and collaboration applications over the WAN,” says Ali Khan, “and our mobile workers need access to them wherever they may be working. The Trapeze networks at each site (currently across 7 European countries) use secure 802.1x authentication with the existing global corporate directory, as per a normal wired login, to recognise the unique IDs of each person when their devices request a connection. They can log in as easily as if they were sitting at their own desks. The Trapeze SmartPass application is deployed to provide a convenient and controlled means of providing guests with wireless Internet access, without compromising security on the corporate LAN.”

As well as supplying and installing the Trapeze solution, LAN2LAN provides a comprehensive technical support and maintenance service.

Ali Khan’s management responsibilities and board-level accountability mean he cannot always be as hands-on as he would like, and the LAN2LAN team gives him the expert back-up he requires to ensure continuity and quality of service to the users in each country.

The Benefits: Productivity and lower costs

Already, the Otsuka teams travelling across Europe are reaping the rewards of a standardised, secure Wi-Fi deployment. Information flows more easily around the company, projects move faster towards completion and collaboration between teams has improved.

“We are getting a better return from the existing assets employed,” says Ali Khan, “because the new Wi-Fi system allows much greater use of the entire infrastructure. When people can be sure of connecting quickly and easily, they will make more use of the resources available.”

Operational and maintenance costs are also reduced, because the new system is easier to manage and maintain. There is less downtime, and the centralised management capability means that routine updates can be completed quickly and with minimal disruption. The Trapeze infrastructure also offers the scalability that is likely to be required as the business grows.

“In this industry, technology is a critical consideration for the achievement of corporate goals,” says Ali Khan. “It also makes a significant difference to the successful delivery of projects and the ability to innovate.”

“With Trapeze and LAN2LAN, Otsuka Europe has the foundations of an agile, scalable infrastructure that will make a sustainable and valuable contribution to the fulfilment of our business mission.”

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Ali Khan, IT Manager,
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