



**Hutchinson
Networks**



“ In Hutchinson Networks, we had a high level of confidence in the technical expertise – we don’t have their level of technical expertise in-house. ”

Les Gilfillan,
European Network Manager,
Chivas Brothers.

/Chivas Brothers



Chivas Brothers
Pernod Ricard

The Client

Chivas Brothers is a global drinks producer and export company steeped in Scottish heritage. It is the only Pernod Ricard business devoted entirely to Scotch whisky and comprises of a prestigious range of single malt and blended whiskies. Chivas Brothers’ award-winning portfolio features some of the world’s most revered Scotch whisky brands including Chivas Regal, Ballantine’s, Royal Salute and The Glenlivet. With a multitude of awards and accolades for its quality, craftsmanship, industry-leading sites and award-winning campaigns, its brands are at the heart of moments of connection across the globe. The company comprises 1,600 employees, 14 Scotch distilleries, two bottling facilities and over 300 warehouses across its 26 sites including Orkney, Scotland and London.

The remote geography and poor network connectivity experienced in some Chivas Brothers distilleries presents unique challenges to their IT network and required innovative solutions to ensure workers are kept up-to-date with essential data.

Industry Food and Drink

Location Headquarters in Paisley, Scotland

Key Solution Challenges

- Following acquisitions, the network infrastructure grew substantially and became more complex with a non-hierarchical network design.
- The IT Infrastructure needed to adapt to a more mobile workforce whilst keeping applications and data safe.
- The Chivas Brothers network estate is spread across a large number of remote sites with many having low bandwidth.

Key Solution Highlights

- The Core Network Upgrade solutions have made the network more resilient. The Network architecture is now more visible and adaptable to new network operations such as Software Defined Networking (SDN).
- Introducing F5 Access Policy Manager (APM) has reduced costs while enabling a mobile workforce through providing secure and easy access to data and applications.
- Since installing Riverbed Steelhead appliances bandwidth utilisation has decreased by over 50% at remote sites and file download speeds have more than doubled.
- Low bandwidth in remote sites was addressed through installing Riverbed Steelhead appliances to improve performance and efficiency of cloud based applications.



Client Challenges

Following the consolidation of networks of three Pernod-Ricard affiliates, Chivas Brothers Ltd, the Absolut Company and Irish Distillers Ltd, the network infrastructure grew substantially and was consolidated across two core sites creating more complexity in the network architecture. So, it was important to understand more about how the network was structured, what equipment was in the expanded network and to ensure that the technology infrastructure was sufficient to support future business growth.

The network is a critical part of Chivas Brothers IT infrastructure so it's vital the network remains robust, reliable and future proof. The age of the equipment needed to be addressed with some of the core switches over seven years old.

As a major company operating in the food and drink sector there is very little downtime during the busy period from July until December, therefore any updates to the core network infrastructure needed to minimise disruption. In the lead-up to Christmas the bottling plants operate seven days a week, so changes to the network were required to be implemented in the first half of the year and staged over time.

The trend towards ever-more distributed enterprises and an increase in mobile workers has meant that the centralised architectures employed by business applications needed to keep pace with these changing mobile workforce needs. The IT network needed to balance a consistent employee experience for mobile workers connecting to corporate resources without sacrificing security.

As the network is spread over a wide range of remote sites there were big challenges in getting bandwidth into sites such as distilleries in northern Scotland. The low bandwidth (restricted to ADSL connections) made the sharing of data between sites more difficult and large file transfers such as CAD files could cause bottlenecks for users and latency was a major source of frustration for remote site users.

Solution Highlights

To understand the network better, a series of workshops were held to learn more about the network and it was recommended that Chivas Brothers embarked on a core network upgrade.

"Hutchinson Networks looked at the network in more detail than any other IT partners had previously through an audit, monitoring the critical elements of the network." Les Gilfillan, European Network Manager, Chivas Brothers.

Virtual Switching System (VSS) was implemented in Chivas Brothers 2 main sites. This helped improve the resilience through introducing several layers of redundancy by replacing the ageing infrastructure with a new VSS to give higher throughput and improved scalability by making the network infrastructure easier to upgrade.

By introducing a more hierarchical Core-Access design the network was future proofed and is more adaptable to future approaches such as Software Defined Networking (SDN) and ACI design.

Implementing F5 Access Policy Manager® (APM) has provided a faster application performance and improved remote access management, where access policies can now be based on identity, context and environment, while still delivering a seamless user experience for Chivas Regal employees. The F5 Remote Access solution gave real cost savings when compared to Microsoft Direct Access and is much more stable and robust than previous solutions (Checkpoint VPN).

"Hutchinson Networks are monitoring the Chivas Brothers network 24/7, giving me peace of mind that if an issue comes up out of hours, Hutchinson Networks will be on top of it right away." said Les Gilfillan.

Hutchinson Networks helped introduce a centralised VPN portal for all Pernod Ricard employees and third-party suppliers and contractors. It provided a simple solution for mobile workers when travelling, giving the same functionality as desk based access. The solution detected whether users were onsite or off-site and provided simple automated secure VPN access, based on active directory user groups.

"Hutchinson Networks are our first port of call for any network issues and are very responsive. When a telecom company cut through vital high capacity links on the Erskine bridge, Glasgow, this left the Chivas Regal Kilmalid site isolated from company applications. Hutchinson Networks gave us crucial advice and worked with us tirelessly to provide a workaround, finding another link that gave us connectivity whilst our provider fixed the issue." said Les Gilfillan.

Contact us to learn more



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Hutchinson Networks is a thought leader in ideas and technology. With on-the-ground experience in 80+ countries we span the globe, delivering next generation solutions and services to large multinationals, critical public-sector infrastructure and growing start-ups. Headquartered in Edinburgh our solution architects and engineers are trained and accredited in the latest technologies, guiding clients on the right blend of on-premise, hybrid or cloud services that meets their needs.