

Building a Simpler, More Secure Foundation for Global Growth with Cisco SASE

Industry:
Distribution

Location:
The Woodlands, Texas

Organization:
Revenue: Multibillion-dollar company
Customer Base: 12,000+ customers
Global Reach: 60 countries (including US, Mexico, Europe, and China)

Solution:
Cisco SASE | Cisco User Protection Suite | Cisco Breach Protection Suite

Nexeo Plastics is one of the world's largest thermoplastic resin and compound distributors, serving over 12,000 customers across 60 countries, including the US, Mexico, Europe, and China. The $3 billion organization works with over 1,300 material suppliers and brands to distribute more than 20,000 distinct materials across diverse industries including automotive, healthcare, packaging, wire and cable, and 3D printing.

Rethinking the security architecture for global scale

From Legos and laptops to automobiles and medical devices, thermoplastic resins are everywhere. Getting those goods where they need to go is the business of Nexeo Plastics, one of the world's largest distributors of thermoplastic resins and compounds.

The organization works with more than 1,300 suppliers and brands to distribute over 20,000 distinct materials. Managing a high-volume distribution operation across 60 countries requires consistent and secure connectivity for sales, operations, and back-office teams, regardless of location.

With renewals for its existing Security Service Edge (SSE) and multi-factor authentication (MFA) solutions approaching, Nexeo Plastics saw an opportunity to reduce the complexity of its fragmented security stack and rethink its architectural approach. To provide its extensive global workforce with secure, seamless private access to AWS workloads and business-critical applications, the organization wanted to:

- Simplify and standardize the environment
- Establish a more scalable foundation for securing its global workforce
- Improve the experience for users and IT
- Strengthen security
- Optimize total cost of ownership
- Simplify licensing and management

But reducing complexity didn't mean choosing a basic solution. Nexeo Plastics needed a robust, flexible architecture capable of supporting varying security and regulatory requirements across markets while delivering fast, seamless access to critical systems for employees anywhere in the world.

© 2026 Cisco and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

"Today, Cisco SASE is the backbone of our connectivity architecture, bringing together SD-WAN and full-stack cybersecurity in a unified platform. With security capabilities, policies, and controls integrated into that backbone, we can centrally manage and secure our global environment. Best of all, we can scale the business without needing to scale the IT organization alongside it."

Rehman Ghuman, Vice President of IT at Nexeo Plastics

Replacing fragmented security with a scalable global architecture

For Rehman Ghuman, Vice President of IT at Nexeo Plastics, adding more tools and more people wasn't the answer. "Our goal is to be more optimized and strategic with our time and resources," he explains. "You can only do that if your technology stack is both robust and standardized and simplified for the end user."

His criteria for a new solution included the ability to:

- Protect access to AWS workloads, business-critical applications, cloud resources, and the internet without forcing employees or IT to navigate a fragmented collection of technologies
- Scale with Nexeo Plastics as the business grows globally and the threat landscape evolves

Creating a unified backbone for security and connectivity

Supporting Nexeo Plastics throughout the initiative was Alykas, an award-winning solution and managed services provider. Alykas helped Nexeo to strengthen security, reduce complexity, and prepare for future growth.

After evaluating the Cisco SASE framework, Nexeo Plastics determined it was the best fit for its needs, replacing the company's incumbent solutions as part of a broader move toward an integrated Cisco security ecosystem.

Cisco SASE is an integrated architecture that brings together Cisco SD-WAN for intelligent, reliable connectivity and Cisco Secure Access for modern cloud-delivered security. Together, they provide users with consistent, secure access to applications and resources from anywhere.

"One of the main reasons we selected Cisco was the native integration," says Ghuman. "It was a no-brainer for us to use something that's simple, standardized, and has a variety of capabilities and offerings designed to work together within a common architecture." Another factor in the decision, notes Ghuman, was Cisco's reputation as a strategic market leader with an established, proven roadmap.

© 2026 Cisco and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

From strategy to production in three months

Close collaboration among Nexeo Plastics' technical architects, its partners, and Cisco helped accelerate the SASE initiative from planning to production in just three months by:

- Aligning business users, leadership, partners, and technical teams around the larger objective
- Communicating proactively throughout the rollout
- Establishing a feedback loop to address issues as they emerged

"I can't underestimate the significance of change management," stresses Ghuman. "Proactive communication, overcommunication, is perhaps the key for our success."

The company rolled out Cisco Secure Access – Secure Private Access and Secure Internet Access, providing its global workforce with simple and secure access to AWS workloads, business-critical applications, internet resources, and other services–regardless of their location.

"Today, Cisco SASE is the backbone of our connectivity architecture, bringing together SD-WAN and full-stack cybersecurity in a unified platform," explains Ghuman. "With security capabilities, policies, and controls integrated into that backbone, we can centrally manage and secure our global environment. Best of all, we can scale the business without needing to scale the IT organization alongside it."

Simplifying secure access for a workforce on the move

Whether an employee is working from home, an office, or a coffee shop using a public website, cloud resource, or private enterprise application, Cisco routes the user through the company's secure environment to the appropriate destination. "Knowing that every connection is being proactively monitored and protected gives us peace of mind," says Ghuman.

The user experience remains consistent even as employees travel between countries. "Whether you're in the Texas office today and Europe or Asia tomorrow, your experience will not change," says Ghuman. "You're still using the same platform, same inputs, and getting the same outputs."

Cisco's global Points of Presence (PoPs) also provide localized entry points that help reduce latency for Nexeo Plastics' geographically dispersed users.

This converged solution also simplifies the IT architecture and management requirements. Ghuman explains: "Instead of maintaining and integrating multiple technologies with different policies, interfaces, and skill requirements, my team can manage a more standardized environment."

A simplified, standardized approach pays off

A better experience with less friction

Following the SASE rollout, Nexeo Plastics' user satisfaction score climbed to more than 90%, while support tickets dropped by approximately 30%. Employees now have a consistent access experience regardless of where they work, eliminating the need to navigate different technologies and connection methods based on location.

"A simplified approach means fewer end-user headaches and a more productive experience," says Ghuman.

Lower costs, greater value

Globally, Nexeo Plastics has reduced its total cost of ownership by approximately 30% by consolidating its technology stack around a more integrated architecture. Ghuman emphasizes, "These aren't just one-time savings; they're recurring benefits that will continue year after year."

Ghuman describes the outcome of the project as a rare opportunity to achieve three key goals: "doing things cheaper, better, and faster."

© 2026 Cisco and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

Stronger security without added complexity

Security has remained a top priority for Nexeo Plastics. Because traffic moves through a standardized, monitored environment, the company has greater confidence in its ability to protect users and resources wherever work happens.

“You can only secure something if you’re managing it,” Ghuman says. “And effective management starts with having consistent visibility and control across the environment.”

Built to scale with the business

Nexeo Plastics’ integrated architecture is designed to protect the organization today while supporting the business as it expands. If the company adds users, locations, or countries, Ghuman doesn’t expect network security to become an obstacle. “With our Cisco SASE framework, it won’t be a technical challenge for us to grow our business,” he says.

Building for what comes next

For Nexeo Plastics, futureproofing doesn’t mean trying to predict exactly what the future threat landscape will look like. It means creating an architecture capable of adapting as technology, threats, and business needs evolve.

Enabling AI innovation securely

Nexeo Plastics is already exploring AI to drive operational efficiencies and cost savings. Ghuman expects its role across the business to grow, but he recognizes that greater AI adoption will introduce new security responsibilities as well.

“AI makes things easier and faster, but it doesn’t make it any simpler for the security piece. That’s where Cisco comes into play with its native, simplified, integrated offering ecosystem, where we can apply guardrails and different controls to make sure our data and our assets remain very secure.”

Optimizing today while preparing for tomorrow

Nexeo Plastics is continuing to build on its Cisco security environment. Prior to the SASE initiative, the company was already using Cisco Extended Detection and Response (XDR) to deliver threat intelligence and visibility for Nexeo’s security operations. The organization is now looking to Cisco Duo as its next step for identity and access management.

“We are exploring the potential of additional Cisco solutions to further simplify and standardize our tech stack, provide a more seamless experience to our end users, and make it easier for the team to manage and continuously improve the entire integrated platform,” shares Ghuman.

In a world where cybersecurity and technology evolve too quickly for any architecture to remain static, Ghuman believes agility, flexibility, and ongoing optimization are essential.

“What got us here is not going to get us there,” says Ghuman. “It’s the continuous improvement and proactive mindset that puts us in a stronger position. With Cisco helping us create, implement, and manage global solutions, we have the foundation and confidence to evolve with the business and stay ahead of what comes next.”

© 2026 Cisco and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved. Cisco and the Cisco logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Cisco and/or its affiliates in the U.S. and other countries. To view a list of Cisco trademarks, go to this URL: www.cisco.com/go/trademarks. Third-party trademarks mentioned are the property of their respective owners. The use of the word partner does not imply a partnership relationship between Cisco and any other company. (1110R)