Manufacturer Improves Operational Efficiency

Johns Manville optimizes SAP, employee sign-in, and authentication performance to improve operational efficiency.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JOHNS MANVILLE
- Industry: Manufacturing
- Location: Denver, CO U.S.A.
- Number of Employees: 6600

CHALLENGE
- Maximize availability and performance of SAP inventory control system
- Support single sign-on
- Simplify management

SOLUTION
- Cisco ACE Application Control Engine Module
- Cisco Catalyst 6500 Series Switches

RESULTS
- Increases plant floor employee productivity by accelerating login and authentication
- Optimizes application performance by load balancing traffic to least-busy servers
- Simplifies management and support

Challenge

Johns Manville, a Berkshire Hathaway company, is a leading manufacturer and marketer of premium-quality products for building insulation, mechanical insulation, commercial roofing, and roof insulation, as well as fibers and non-wovens for commercial, industrial, and residential applications. In business since 1858, the Denver-based company operates 40 manufacturing facilities in North America, Europe, and China.

Johns Manville relies on an SAP business system in its manufacturing plants and warehouses for inventory management. Plant floor employees, such as forklift drivers and shipping agents, continuously enter data into the inventory management system through an SAP portal as orders are entered, packed, and shipped, and as inventory is moved. Forklift vehicles are equipped with PCs and scanners that connect to the SAP portal through wireless connections. The SAP portal also provides access to the plant intranet and other applications.

Until recently, Johns Manville had used Cisco® Content Switching appliances to load-balance network traffic into the SAP ERP system. When load balancer upgrades became necessary, Johns Manville considered several alternatives.

Solution

"We chose the Cisco ACE Application Control Engine Module for Cisco Catalyst 6500 Series switches," says Jeremy Sing, ITD Network Solutions Manager. "We liked the modular architecture and not having to manage separate appliances. We also liked the fact that Cisco ACE is hardware-based for high performance and scalability."

Cisco ACE is a next-generation load-balancing and application-delivery solution that increases application availability and accelerates application and server performance.

Johns Manville deployed two Cisco ACE modules in its Cisco Catalyst® 6500 Series core switches to load-balance incoming SAP inventory control traffic to the least-busy servers. The module uses best-in-class application-switching algorithms and highly available system software and hardware to increase application availability. A single module can manage up to 16 Gbps of application traffic, and up to 64 Gbps with four modules in a single Catalyst 6500 Series switch chassis.

Server efficiency is increased through flexible application traffic management and the offloading of CPU-intensive tasks, such as Secure Socket Layer (SSL) encryption and decryption processing and TCP session management.

Johns Manville also has deployed additional Cisco ACE modules for web traffic load-balancing and for development purposes in the company's disaster recovery center.

> "The Cisco ACE load balancer is a stable product, requiring very little support once it has been deployed. It provides Johns Manville with a powerful technical tool for improving operational efficiency."
>
> **—Jeremy Sing, IT Network Solutions Manager**

Results

The Cisco ACE module plays an important role in Johns Manville's single sign-on and authentication process for plant floor employees. Plant floor personnel can now quickly log in one time to their devices, eliminating waiting. ACE authenticates users through the portal, providing access to the SAP inventory management application, plant intranet, and other productivity tools for authorized employees.

PRODUCT LIST

Routing and Switching
- Cisco Catalyst 6500 Series Switches
- Cisco ACE Application Control Engine

For Johns Manville, choosing the Cisco ACE simplified integration and support by keeping all support under the Cisco umbrella. As a module, Cisco ACE is easily installed in the Cisco Catalyst 6500 Series switches, simplifying support by the Cisco Technical Assistance Center (TAC) and providing access to Cisco expertise and an escalation path if necessary.

"The Cisco ACE load balancer is a stable product, requiring very little support once it has been deployed," says Sing. "It provides Johns Manville with a powerful technical tool for improving operational efficiency."

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco ACE Application Control Engine Module visit:
www.cisco.com/en/US/products/ps6906/index.html.

To learn more about Johns Manville, visit http://www.jm.com.

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