Unilever

### Organization

FIMA/Lever/Iglo/BestFoods

Lisbon, Portugal

### Industry

Personal Goods

### Challenge

- Protect, improve performance of SAP, VoIP
- Justify MPLS' value
- Prevent congestion despite growing traffic loads
- Control peer-to-peer, Web surfing, and other recreational traffic

### Solution

- Deploy Blue Coat's application traffic management system to provide visibility and control within existing resources

### Benefits

- SAP and VoIP performs reliably and with out disruption
- Prevents congestion by controlling non-business applications and streamlining business traffic
- Achieves ROI and 360,000 euros in cost avoidance (nearly $500,000 USD)

# FIMA/Lever/Iglo/BestFoods Lisbon, Portugal

Conglomerate avoids link upgrade costs of 360,000 euros (nearly $500,000 USD) while improving bandwidth efficiency and SAP and VoIP performance across an MPLS-based WAN

When Lisbon-based FIMA/Lever/Iglo/BestFoods implemented a wide-area network to support everything from SAP to VoIP, it was the first of its kind within the Unilever family. There are 11 sites, nine of which connect to the headquarters office via an MPLS cloud and one via ATM – with voice and data converging over the entire network. On paper, it makes sense. The WAN serves 1,000 users throughout Portugal, and by many accounts, convergence in an MPLS environment is the wave of the future. However, as IT has learned, that wave can come crashing down at any moment without a system in place to keep WAN – and business – performance intact.

Maximizing the value of a consolidated multi-service WAN presents significant challenges: Prevent congestion. Prioritize business applications. Control bandwidth allocation. Ensure VoIP quality. Suppress non-business traffic. If unchecked, these challenges undermine vital business operations.

Knowing this, the group of subsidiaries takes a proactive approach to managing its network and protecting its business applications. Link sizes, which range from 64K to 768K at remote sites to 6MB at the Lisbon headquarters, must be leveraged more efficiently. With the help of a QoS-savvy reseller and an industry-leading solution from Blue Coat, FIMA/Lever/Iglo/BestFoods ensures that the performance of its WAN and critical applications always supports business needs, regardless of link sizes or changes in traffic loads.

"Our network is very advanced," said Joaquim Camoes, infrastructure and communications administrator for FIMA/Lever/Iglo/BestFoods. "We have an MPLS cloud. No one in Unilever has this technology. PacketShaper gives us more ability to free up bandwidth and control application performance. We can see and manage what is happening on our network."

The results have been adding up ever since. In just nine months, FIMA/Lever/Iglo/BestFoods has avoided 360,000 euros (nearly $500,000 USD) of bandwidth upgrades. The investment in Blue Coat has already paid off, and every day that passes signals another day that the organization's ROI grows. Had the organization not deployed Blue Coat's application traffic management system, IT knows that the significance in savings could easily have been reversed in losses.

## THE PROBLEM: WAN Congestion Causes SAP, VoIP to Perform Unreliably

The IT team recalls the time when users called in daily, providing more than enough notice that something was terribly wrong with the WAN's performance.

"SAP is our critical application. All the sites use SAP," Camoes said. "If we couldn't prioritize traffic, it could take one hour or more to deliver critical information from one site to another. All of our bandwidth was occupied all of the time."

VoIP sessions suffered as well. The service, provided by Orange Business Services,

"With PacketShaper, SAP performance has improved significantly. Log sessions that once took more than an hour are now completed in a timely and reliable manner."

**- Joaquim Camoes, Infrastructure and communications administrator**

was disrupted by other traffic so much that it became useless. The unreliable performance took its toll on the organization's users. They became impatient and frustrated. Productivity was threatened.

IT administrators tried desperately to determine the source of the problems, but the lack of application-layer visibility prevented them from drawing any firm conclusions. Even if IT was able to advance beyond speculation and identify the source of performance problems, the department was ill-equipped to take corrective action.

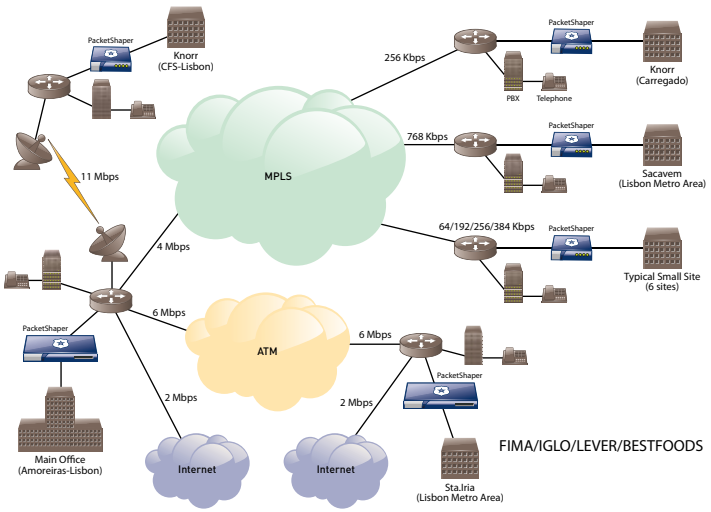
The stakes were obviously high. The organization had invested in a number of applications and services in an effort to enhance business efficiency and enterprise-wide communication. SAP and VoIP were the two most mission-critical. Justifying those investments, let alone ensuring effective performance for all business applications, was imperative.

Upgrading links was hardly a viable option. After all, FIMA/Lever/Iglo/BestFoods wanted to save money, not spend it. The organization wanted to leverage existing resources more efficiently, and it knew that bandwidth upgrades would do nothing to guarantee more reliable performance for business applications. In fact, the conglomerate knew that larger links could open the floodgates for more aggressive non-business traffic, enlarging the congestion problem and skewing the allocation of bandwidth even more. There had to be a better way.

## THE SOLUTION: Visibility, Control, and Acceleration All in One System

At first, the organization considered manipulating routers or investing in protocol analyzers. But IT quickly discounted them for two reasons – insufficient visibility and lack of control capabilities, respectively. FIMA/Lever/Iglo/BestFoods acknowledged that it needed a comprehensive solution that ensured unwavering alignment between WAN resources and business operations.

Open to consultation, the organization met with SOL-S e SOLSUNI, a leading reseller of QoS solutions. The reseller advised the conglomerate to deploy a more advanced product that provided visibility, control, and acceleration – everything the organization would need to ensure that the WAN supported business needs reliably and cost-effectively. That product was Blue Coat's application traffic management appliance, PacketShaper.



"I can see what applications and users are consuming bandwidth, and we can increase bandwidth allocation only for critical applications. We have generated up to 50 percent bandwidth savings on traffic using PacketShaper."

**- Joaquim Camoes, Infrastructure and communications administrator**

With PacketShaper's application-layer visibility, FIMA/Lever/Iglo/BestFoods can automatically identify traffic running across the WAN. Finally, Camoes and his team can analyze performance and determine sources of problems. The days of speculation are over. PacketShaper's onboard reporting validates more than 60 performance metrics, such as response times, link utilization, network efficiency, server and user delays, top bandwidth consumers, and more. This combination of traffic discovery, analysis, and reporting provides a solid foundation for the conglomerate to apply appropriate policy controls.

Blue Coat's application-aware bandwidth management features enable FIMA/Lever/Iglo/BestFoods to control bandwidth allocation based on each application's relative business priority. The organization can establish partitions, which serve as protected lanes for delivering traffic to intended destinations without disruption. In addition, a variety of options – from rate and priority controls to admissions and denial policies – regulate traffic delivery to ensure that business priorities are supported. Such control ensures that SAP and VoIP receive ample bandwidth, regardless of changes in traffic loads or user demands. Less-urgent traffic like FTP and email are provisioned with appropriate amounts of bandwidth to perform at an effective pace, while non-business applications are relegated to minimal portions of bandwidth, if at all.

## THE RESULTS: Cost Avoidance of 360,000 Euros in Only 9 Months

For FIMA/Lever/Iglo/BestFoods, the results have been as startling as they have been refreshing. The performance of critical applications like SAP and VoIP has improved. SAP and Orange's VoIP service are no longer disrupted by other traffic, particularly non-business applications like P2P, streaming media, and Web surfing.

"Implementing a product of this type was very important to us," Camoes said. "I can see what applications and users are consuming bandwidth, and we can increase bandwidth allocation only for critical applications. We have generated up to 50 percent bandwidth savings on traffic using PacketShaper. I am very happy with this product."

While information delivery is definitely faster, FIMA/Lever/Iglo/BestFoods' rate of spending has slowed considerably. In fact, in the case of bandwidth costs, additional spending has been non-existent. Since the PacketShaper deployment at the beginning of 2004, the organization has been able to avoid costly link upgrades by conducting accurate capacity planning and optimizing bandwidth for business needs only. In nine months, the conglomerate's bandwidth cost avoidance amounted to 360,000 euros (nearly $500,000 USD) and counting. The PacketShaper system had already paid for itself, and the ROI has continued to grow with each passing day.

With PacketShaper, the WAN is a better-managed, cost-contained communications vehicle that is helping to drive the organization's business. IT and operations are truly aligned, enabling the organization to leverage a faster WAN, faster applications, and a faster business.

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