



# Real estate services giant elevates application performance and network efficiency for cloud-first strategy

## Cushman & Wakefield builds business-driven, global SD-WAN on Unity EdgeConnect SD-WAN edge platform

In the world of real estate services, Cushman & Wakefield is a giant. The company spans 70 countries, providing its clients a wide range of services to maximize the utilization and value of their property assets, plan future property investments, develop and manage facilities, and much more.

Cushman & Wakefield has grown dramatically through mergers and acquisitions, which created complexity in its wide-area network (WAN). Each

organization in the M&A had legacy MPLS networks and its own regional data centers. All application traffic was backhauled to the respective data center and then egressed to the internet or other data centers. Consequently, the WAN became a huge bottleneck, resulting in slow application performance, and the company needed to improve the experience for end users.

The solution was to adopt a cloud-first strategy, which led Cushman & Wakefield to SD-WAN.



25% HIGHER APP  
USABILITY



\$1.5 M SAVINGS  
PER YEAR



ASSURES NETWORK  
UPTIME

Chris Butcher, platform architect for global networks, cloud and perimeter security, explains, “With SD-WAN we could connect all our branch locations securely and directly to the cloud, with full resiliency and assurance of predictable and consistent application performance. This is central to delivering a high-quality user experience and improving efficiency. It all just made good business sense.”



**We can centrally define application classes and security policies, allowing the EdgeConnect appliances to intelligently make decisions on how to ideally route traffic. This allows us to get into the provider backbone networks at the nearest point of entry for each location, improving application performance and quality of the end-user experience.”**

— Chris Butcher, Platform Architect for Global Networks, Cloud and Perimeter Security, Cushman & Wakefield

## Enabling an application-aware architecture

Cushman & Wakefield considered a number of SD-WAN vendors, but Silver Peak stood out from the others by enabling a business-driven WAN architecture — a key strategic requirement. Butcher notes, “In a modern-day network, it’s not just about connectivity; it’s about providing

prioritization and decision-making on where you send traffic based on specific application requirements. Having an application-aware SD-WAN platform at the edge allows us to tightly align our network with our business requirements.”

The company has deployed the Silver Peak [Unity EdgeConnect™](#) SD-WAN edge platform across 200 business locations — a total of 337 EdgeConnect appliances, some configured for high availability — including all branch offices and eight data centers in four regions of the world. MPLS is being decommissioned and replaced with dual broadband links terminated on each EdgeConnect appliance.



The EdgeConnect platform is now the standard WAN edge solution for Cushman & Wakefield, providing application-based routing, traffic filtering, and comprehensive SD-WAN capabilities such as [path conditioning](#), quality of service (QoS), and [dynamic path control](#). The company also takes advantage of the optional [Unity Boost™](#) WAN optimization software performance pack to accelerate applications across continents.

In addition, the EdgeConnect platform is service chained with Zscaler for local internet breakout. This enables Cushman & Wakefield to enforce tighter controls of traffic flow. For example, applying QoS policies on EdgeConnect and security controls on Zscaler means that critical real-time applications, SaaS platforms, and data center-hosted applications have priority over other traffic, such as media streaming services, which could consume the bandwidth of the branch office circuits. Moreover, by consolidating on the EdgeConnect platform and adopting Zscaler cloud security, Cushman & Wakefield expect OpEx savings of \$1.5 million per year.

## Assuring network resources based on application requirements

Through the [Unity Orchestrator™](#) management interface, Butcher and his team centrally configure and define a wide range of business intent overlays for classes of applications, each with a specific QoS policy to ensure each application class is afforded the network resources it needs to perform optimally. For example, Skype for Business is classified as “real time” and given top priority for local internet breakout. Critical business applications such as SharePoint, Office 365, and other commonly used SaaS applications are classified as “SaaS,” which get the next highest priority. Less-critical applications fall into the default classification.

Moreover, the centralized orchestration provided by Orchestrator, with the ability to establish consistent application and security policies by class of application, enables EdgeConnect to dynamically steer application traffic according to those policies across all locations. For example, Butcher can use Orchestrator to automatically configure IPsec tunnels to route internet and trusted commonly used SaaS applications out for inspection through Zscaler to the Zscaler Enforcement Node (ZEN) closest to each branch to enforce consistent security policies. Similarly, Microsoft Office 365, Skype for Business, and SharePoint traffic is broken out directly from the branches to the nearest Microsoft application instance. For the legacy applications that run on premises, like Microsoft SQL Server and financial applications, traffic is backhauled from the branches to the appropriate data center.

Butcher says, “We can centrally define application classes and security policies, allowing the EdgeConnect appliances to intelligently make decisions on how to ideally route traffic. This allows us to get into the provider backbone networks at the nearest point of entry for each location, improving application performance and quality of the end-user experience.”

In fact, this carefully orchestrated control over traffic flow and application prioritization, combined with SD-WAN network optimization, has improved application performance on average by 35 percent.

## Driving higher productivity and customer satisfaction

With a single click within Orchestrator, Butcher and his team can also selectively apply Boost WAN optimization, whether to specific application classes or to locations where latency is an issue due to long distance.

Butcher remarks, “With Unity Boost, we’ve reduced latency for accessing applications across continents with a 25 percent improvement in application usability. This enables us to deliver the best possible user experience.”

He adds that the link redundancy and sub-millisecond failover between links ensures that applications remain up and running even if one of the links experiences congestion, a brownout, or complete outage. “EdgeConnect has done an amazing job of keeping our applications running and making sure the business doesn’t see any of the technical issues on the underlying transport services. But I’m not just worried about the network connection staying up; I’m also worried about how the applications are performing. That’s why we’ve focused so much on application delivery.”

The reason is that application performance directly affects end-user quality of experience and productivity, which ultimately has an impact on customer satisfaction.

Butcher concludes, “By leveraging the EdgeConnect SD-WAN edge platform, we enable Cushman & Wakefield to collaborate effectively and efficiently between regions to service our multinational customers in a truly global way.”

For more information on Silver Peak and our solutions, please visit: [silver-peak.com](http://silver-peak.com)

## Customer

**Cushman & Wakefield** is a leading global real estate services firm that delivers exceptional value for real estate occupiers and owners. Cushman & Wakefield is among the largest real estate services firms with approximately 51,000 employees in approximately 200 offices and 70 countries. In 2018, the firm had revenue of \$8.2 billion across core services of property, facilities and project management, leasing, capital markets, valuation, and other services.

## Challenge

Following a series of mergers and acquisitions, Cushman & Wakefield had separate networks with global branch offices backhauling all traffic to their respective regional data centers across expensive MPLS circuits. This caused a huge bottleneck, slowing application performance and degrading quality of the end-user experience.

## Solution

Cushman & Wakefield adopted a cloud-first strategy and built a global SD-WAN with the EdgeConnect SD-WAN edge platform deployed at 200 business locations around the world, including all branch offices and eight data centers. The company also implemented Unity Boost WAN optimization and service chained EdgeConnect with Zscaler cloud security. The global SD-WAN is managed centrally using Orchestrator.

## Results

- Provides local breakout at branches to cloud and SaaS applications
- Determines optimal route for traffic based on application type
- Consolidates routing and traffic filtering on single edge device
- Produces OpEx savings of \$1.5 million per year
- Improves application performance by 35 percent on average
- Delivers consistent security policy enforcement across all locations
- Accelerates cross-continent application access with Boost
- Ensures network resiliency and uptime with sub-millisecond failover
- Increases application usability by 25 percent, improving quality of end-user experience
- Enables efficient global collaboration to serve multinational customers
- Improves user productivity and customer satisfaction



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