

Honda & SingTel

Supporting business
requirements into the future



SingTel impresses Honda with regional expertise,
to deploy a reliable, scalable and cost-effective
managed IP VPN network across Asia and Oceania

› Honda: Major Innovative Automotive Manufacturer

Honda was established in 1948 with the aim of creating value with high-quality products at reasonable prices, manufactured under environmentally friendly commitments to enhance safety for its customers worldwide.

With a global network of more than 500 subsidiaries and affiliates, Honda develops, manufactures and markets a wide variety of products, ranging from small general-purpose engines, scooters, automobiles to solar panels and compact business jets.

Asian Honda Motor Co., Ltd. was established in 1964 as a motorcycle distributor in Thailand. In 1996, the company assumed the role of Honda's ASEAN Regional Headquarters. With the growth of Asia and Oceania, parent company Honda's focus on localizing operations saw Asian Honda Motor Co., Ltd. appointed as the Asia and Oceania Regional Headquarters in 2004. This included responsibilities to coordinate and support operations in more than 12 countries in the region such as Australia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

Executive Summary

› Customer Name

Asian Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (Honda) and more than 20 subsidiaries in Asia and Oceania

› Industry

Automotive

› Business Challenge

- Reliable partner to provide a stable, robust and flexible network across Asia and Oceania
- Continuous exchange of mission-critical information between regional offices

› SingTel Solution

- SingTel ConnectPlus Internet Protocol Virtual Private Network (IP VPN)

› Business Value

- Scalable, highly available network that allows new locations, users and applications to be added easily and cost-effectively
- Improved manageability and accountability with one service provider
- Excellent customer support

› The Business Challenge

As the business in Asia and Oceania grew exponentially, so did Honda's need to have a robust network backbone to support its operations in both open and telecommunications-regulated markets. Each country in the region had its own specific set of challenges, and each subsidiary in turn needed the flexibility to make changes to their network as they saw fit.

"Japan headquarters' policy is to decentralise IT [Information Technology] management to the region and even to individual subsidiaries. Network decision capabilities were devolved to the region or even individual companies. We needed the support of a service provider who has the experience to deal with the diverse cultures in Asia and Oceania, to piece the unique requirements of subsidiaries in each country together to form our enterprise network in the region," said Mr Masayuki Kashiwabara, General Manager of the IT Division, Asian Honda Motor Co., Ltd.

Cost and scalability were two additional concerns of Honda. As the business grew in Asia and Oceania, so did the volume of traffic. A stable, secure and highly available network was required to ensure continuous

transmission of data. In addition, the network needed to allow for seamless and secure communications of confidential data within the business.

"For example, we have large CATIA [Computer Aided Three-dimensional Interactive Application] files that contain sensitive product information. These files need to be transmitted between headquarters in Japan and regional offices. A stable, secure network will ensure such data gets through completely," said Mr Kashiwabara.

› SingTel ConnectPlus IP VPN: The Right Solution Combined with the Right Expertise

SingTel's unmatched technological expertise, regional presence and strong partnerships were key factors why Honda chose the service provider. Having production facilities in telecommunications-regulated markets such as India, Pakistan and Vietnam, the organisation needed a reliable partner who could help ensure that its network was always up and running.

SingTel proposed its market leading solution – ConnectPlus Internet Protocol Virtual Private Network (IP VPN), providing the organisation with the bandwidth



it needed for secure and reliable communications. The managed network solution also allowed for flexibility in customising the network according to each country and subsidiary's requirements.

Due to the complex nature of the regional network, designing a powerful solution took almost 18 months. During this period, SingTel worked closely with Honda to ensure every concern and expectation of the network was addressed. Once the design stage was complete, implementation was smooth sailing and took just over a month to successful completion.

► Honda's Secure, Scalable and Cost-effective Network in Asia and Oceania

Now that Honda is supported by SingTel ConnectPlus IP VPN, its network in Asia and Oceania enjoys improved network quality and seamless communications. The ability to customize each subsidiary's network based on local requirements combined with SingTel's regional expertise have also given way to higher productivity and increased cost savings. Limited downtime incidents mean that Honda now has improved communications with little service disruptions.

"SingTel has strong regional partnerships and closer ties with the domestic operators which we were able to leverage. Honda was able to move from copper cables to fibre optic cables allowing us to enjoy fast and stable connections with all of our subsidiaries in the region. For example, now in Thailand, we are able to enjoy not only instant, but a stable connection every time we make VoIP [Voice over Internet Protocol] calls to our headquarters in Japan," highlighted Mr Kashiwabara.

SingTel's regional presence also means faster response to network issues. "Many times network disruptions are not even SingTel's fault. For example, in India we had a disruption due to construction activities. However, in each case, SingTel was able to quickly and smoothly rectify the situation, giving us regular updates on the situation," he continued.

Network security is always a major concern of any organisation, but Honda enjoys peace of mind with SingTel. "SingTel's impressive track record of business successes in the region gave us the assurance that our network would be secure and stable enough to allow for the levels of data transmission needed for our business. For example, each CATIA file per automobile part is



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about 50-60MB and there are more than 30,000 parts in an automobile. SingTel's ConnectPlus IP VPN service ensures we are able to transmit such levels of data securely across the region," said Mr Kashiwabara.

SingTel also offers Honda a high level of customisation for each country and subsidiary in the region. In fact, several subsidiaries in the region enjoy in-country billing procedures. SingTel is able to look after each company's needs individually within the domestic environment, as well as manage the Asian network as a whole, offering an end-to-end managed solution.

"Rather than employ more people to look after the network, we rely on SingTel for network maintenance and resolution of any issues that may arise. SingTel's end-to-end management solution allows us to focus on our core business. Now, SingTel is even able to offer us advice on how to enhance our network," said Mr Kashiwabara.

SingTel offers Honda detailed network analysis and reports at regular intervals. Monthly meetings between Honda and SingTel allow each party to raise network concerns. Adopting a Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) methodology, both Honda and SingTel take concerted actions together to improve and enhance the network and its capabilities. The relationship between the service provider and customer is that of a partnership, where the common goal is to ensure Honda has a network that best fulfils their business requirements.

› Future Plans

Honda's network is now able to match the agility required for the business across the region. "Not only has SingTel delivered increased bandwidth to all of our locations at a cost-effective price, they understand our business requirements and take every effort to ensure we have a network that fulfils our business needs," said Mr Kashiwabara.

As businesses show signs of recovery in Asia and Oceania, so does Honda's plans to leverage the network further. The company is looking to expand upon their existing research and development facilities in the region. This will certainly see a rise in not only the amount of data transmitted, but also a higher need for security of the network.

The company will also streamline several processes in the next few years. There will be changes in the procurement policy which will allow for parts purchases to be made across the world. This will require quick parts master and drawing information access and updates to be made available through the enterprise network. In addition, the company will also offer several training courses, integrating VoIP features into the network.

"Given the region's high growth rate, we will certainly see an expansion in the amount of data we transmit from Japan to Asia and Oceania due to increased emphasis on research and development. We are sure that SingTel's ConnectPlus IP VPN service is the ideal platform to achieve this. The network gives us the flexibility to meet the global challenges of today's connected business world," concluded Mr Kashiwabara.

› About SingTel

SingTel is Asia's leading communications group with operations and investments around the world. With significant operations in Singapore and Australia (through wholly-owned subsidiary SingTel Optus), the Group provides a comprehensive portfolio of services that include voice and data services over fixed, wireless and Internet platforms for both the corporate and consumer markets. SingTel's network includes 37 offices in 20 countries and territories throughout Asia Pacific, Europe and the United States. For more information, please go to www.singtel.com and www.optus.com.au.

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