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*- Cesar Tlapanco,*
*IT Manager, GES Group*

# Restaurant and Retail Group Optimizes Network and Increases Security

Grupo Energético del Sureste (GES) was founded in 1985 in Campeche, Mexico. With more than 1,500 employees throughout 121 branches in 83 cities in 12 states, GES manages and operates 50 service stations, where it distributes diesel and gasoline. It also manages franchises, such as its 32 Burger King restaurants, one Church's Chicken restaurant, one GES Auto Wash, two Applebee's restaurants, 32 GES Express convenience stores and three regional offices.

Given a company of this size, the GES Group IT department faces some big challenges, since they have the responsibility of maintaining headquarters and branch computing infrastructure and providing service to a network of 1,300 users. In addition, it must guarantee and safeguard all data.

## Challenge and supplier selection

During its expansion seven years ago, GES Group evaluated a number of different network perimeter security solutions, looking for one that would guarantee information privacy and securely manage data flow to protect it from possible misuse.

Reducing telecommunications costs was critical, especially for the dedicated lines, which headquarters uses to communicate with all business units throughout the region. Previously, GES used ADSL and MPLS modems to connect with its branches.

## Details

Client: GES Group
Industry: Retail / Hospitality
Location: Campeche, Mexico

## Need

Maintain computing infrastructure in more than 121 branches and serving up to 1,500 users while ensuring and protecting information security.

## Solution

Strong network perimeter security to guarantee information security and properly manage data flow to protect it from possible misuse while decreasing costs for telecommunications and facilitating decision-making process.

## Equipment

1 FortiGate 240-D  |  1 Fortigate 800
1 FortiWAN 200-B  |  1 FortiAP 220-B
1 FortiAnalyzer 100-C  |  1 FortiAP 221-B
76 FortiGate 60-D  |  8 FortiGate 40-C

Over the next three years, between 45 to 60 FortiGate 60-D's will be installed.

In addition to the performance, technical functions, simple LDAP authentication and access screen personalization, what drew GES Group's attention was Fortinet's integrated platform, which includes an innovative acquisition model and guaranteed support. All of the above is additionally combined with an appealing cost-benefit relationship.

"Fortinet's service acquisition model, through Solidem (Soluciones Integrales y Desarrollos Empresariales De Chiapas S.A. de C.V.), its partner, enabled us to obtain a ROI quickly," said Cesar Tlapanco, IT Manager for GES Group. "The equipment cost is divided into monthly retainers, allowing us to experience the full benefit of every piece of equipment installed. During the first year, Fortinet provided evaluation and execution for each initiative and policy, which was a priority for GES. In addition, all updates were carried out without us needing to think about purchasing or renewing them."

Fortinet's technical support includes the configuration, deployment and replacement of devices for an unlimited number of events within the first five years: a full coverage insurance for equipment and services during that time.

## Simple and scalable implementation

During the first stage, 41 pieces of equipment were installed. Deployment and startup times were short –around 3 weeks– and always supported by Fortinet's technical team.

With Fortinet's services, GES has a carrier class Internet connection with symmetrical speed to centralize information, services and webpages. Today GES has:

1 FortiGate 240-D | 1 Fortigate 800 | 1 FortiWAN 200-B
1 FortiAnalyzer 100-C | 76 FortiGate 60-D | 8 FortiGate 40-C 1
FortiAP 220-B | 1 FortiAP 221-B

Over the next three years, between 45 to 60 FortiGate 60-D's will be installed, with an average of 15 to 20 per year.

## Tangible Benefits

The first benefits GES Group observed were its in-situ website, self-sufficient email system, heightened security and VPN available in all branches for banking transactions, services and an electronic wallet.

"GES Group has implemented these new functions by taking advantage of Fortinet's FortiGate technology, such as gradual bandwidth optimization, internal services, device access, geographic threat restrictions, access control to a secure intranet and different access levels, among others," said Maria Jose Albarran Ceballos, Territory Account Manager at Fortinet.

Using a single device instead of having multiple pieces of hardware has meant saving money and space for GES Group, which significantly decreased its telecommunications costs. With Fortinet's equipment, the company reduced expenses by more than 60 percent for its dedicated lines, which used to offer low bandwidth at high costs.

With Fortinet's application control, employees have easy access to Internet tools in a more efficient way. End users have noticed differences, especially in resource speed, such as on the Internet and in services on servers managed by FortiGate.

One of the main benefits of the FortiAnalyzer is the ability to obtain information on a monthly basis or on-demand to review network performance, resources provided by IT to users, security and installed capacity. This gives GES Group important and up-to-date information to facilitate a proper decision-making process.

After adopting Fortinet's solutions, GES Group increased the availability and reliability of its network to 99 percent. Resolution times for events, problems and requests have decreased from 72 to just 4 hours.

Thanks to Fortinet, GES Group has consolidated its data, guaranteed its communications, obtained strong network perimeter security, compliance and optimization, leading to more efficient use of resources after this optimization.

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