

Groupe SMA Case Study



SMA

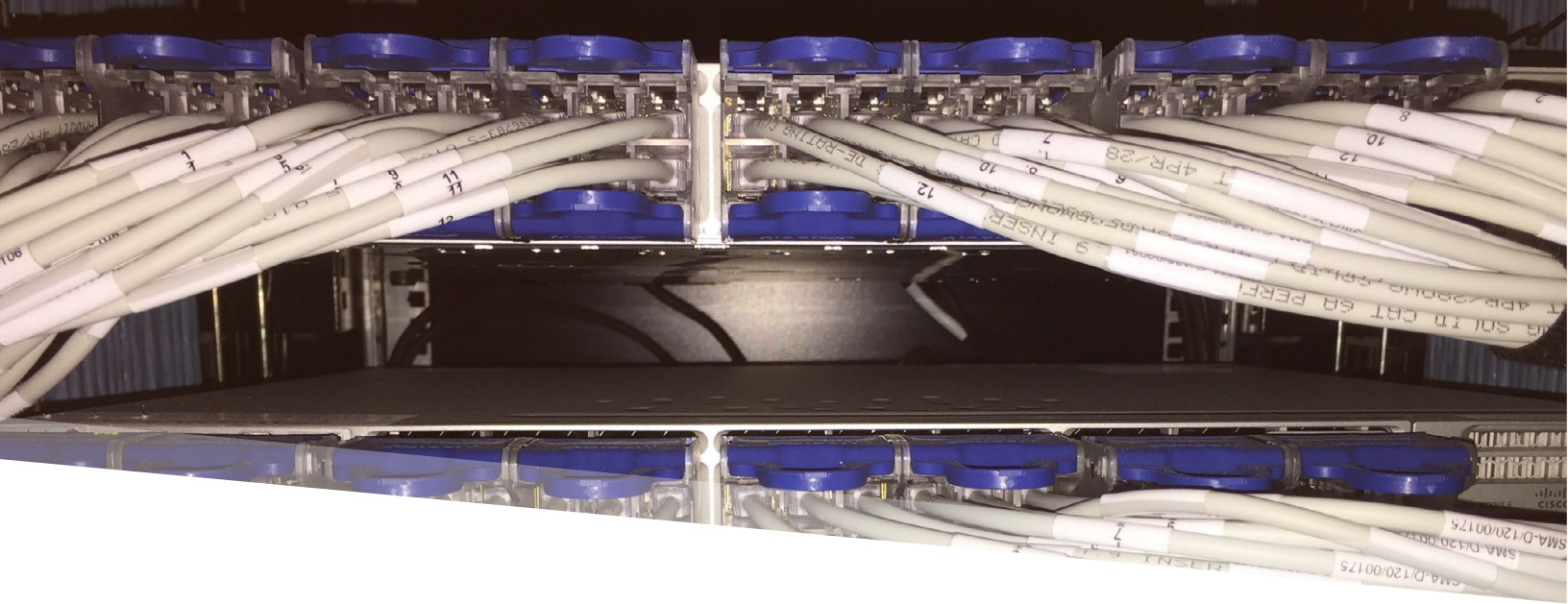
About Groupe SMA

Groupe SMA is a mutual insurance company in the construction and civil engineering sector. Founded in 1859, the company is committed to insuring all the risks of building professionals while raising the awareness of quality and prevention. With more than 3,200 employees serving its 150,000 members, the company has a turnover of more than two billion euros. As a result, Groupe SMA is the French leader of insurance companies for construction industries.

For over 160 years Groupe SMA has constantly adapted to different market developments by trusting its values of expertise and innovation. Groupe SMA is committed to insuring all the risks of the building professionals, therefore, the company covers most of the non-life insurance risks: construction insurance (decennial civil liability and structural damages), overall third-party liability insurance, automotive, damages to property, pecuniary losses, and social risks.

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infrastructure for a connected world



Company
Groupe SMA

Country
Paris, France

Industry
Finance - Insurance

Business Challenges
Relocate operations to a consolidated facility that offers a cost-effective, enhanced network infrastructure while presenting an aesthetically pleasing work environment for employees.

Panduit Solution
Panduit Integrated Data Center Solution and Networked Enterprise Solution composed of Net-Access™ S-Type Server Cabinets and QuickNet™ Copper Assemblies and Patch Panels.

Business Benefits
A new consolidated facility that allows for easier and faster maintenance while offering a state-of-the-art working environment for its employees.

Constructing a Scalable New Headquarters to Increase Performance and Productivity

Panduit helps Groupe SMA build a new network infrastructure to achieve more sustainable operations and maximize network reliability

Groupe SMA has been around long enough to understand the importance of quality construction. Because of this understanding the company knew when it was time to build a new headquarters facility. Previously, 1300 employees were spread among five buildings with outdated network infrastructures that were at least 40 years old.

With the five separate structures, Groupe SMA was experiencing scalability and capacity challenges. It was also sustaining increasing operational expenses, which it needed to control.

To ensure the continuous growth of its overall business and to drive operational efficiencies, Groupe SMA decided to migrate from the existing structures to a new 380,000 square foot (35,000m²) building in downtown Paris. This move would allow the company to manage a facility with full IP capabilities, allowing for more communication points than the previous facilities and drive its critical voice, data, and video needs, along with security/surveillance, access control, clocks, and AV controls. It would also be able to expand its business and maximize space utilization while reducing its operational expenses.

Construction of the new building would involve merging five different sites into one: 1300 people, two data centers, more than 7000 drops and 39 telecom rooms. In addition, the new facility needed to highlight Groupe SMA's commitment to building quality structures and to stay relevant within the construction industry.

"Upgrading our facility would provide an optimal atmosphere for employees to collaborate freely, enhancing productivity. We also want the ability to quickly add new business applications to upgrades as they occur," said David Marais, SI Department, Groupe SMA.

Strategic Objectives

Groupe SMA's decision to merge facilities was based on the desire to better use existing resources and increase manpower productivity. Consolidating all offices into one facility would increase manageability and bring down the cost of operating multiple facilities.

Groupe SMA also wanted to implement a complete upgrade of its IT Infrastructure, which would increase its business innovation and help maintain its competitive advantage. Specifically, supporting 5400+ public IPs for access and use of centralized corporate resources would allow the company to achieve this goal.

Finally, Groupe SMA wanted to enhance its corporate image, showcasing its capabilities and technologies through the state-of-the-art headquarters building.

The facility's physical appearance would impact customers in a positive manner as they directly experienced business operations. The building would also help Groupe SMA to heighten its reputation as a strong industry leader, while positively influencing its stakeholders.

Consolidating the existing offices into one location would allow Groupe SMA to increase manageability and productivity of existing manpower, and control costs while maintaining business agility.

"We needed a solutions provider that could offer a one-stop shopping experience where our business could run smoothly and quickly throughout the transition and into the future," said Marais.



Panduit Solution

Groupe SMA decided to demolish the former structure and build the new headquarters from the ground up. As part of the project, the company chose system integrator SPIE for its expertise in infrastructure cabling while Eiffage Energie handled the building cabling. Groupe SMA chose Cisco Catalyst 3850 switches and needed a maintenance solution compatible with the Cisco equipment. Upon the recommendation of SPIE and distributor CCF Sonepar, which managed the global products logistics, the company chose Panduit for its experience and expertise.

Considering the specific design and significant dimensions (10 levels split into five geographical zones, served by four telecom rooms per level), Groupe SMA initially planned to pre-connect the switches to all the network access points (plugs) to reduce the accesses and the handling operations in the telecom rooms and to easily manage the 7000 ports while ensuring an aesthetic look and feel.

The company deployed Net-Access™ S-Type Server Cabinets to house the Cisco core switches and network fabric devices. These cabinets provide Groupe SMA with effective thermal management to ensure proper equipment operation and increased uptime. The modular design incorporates flexibility for future expansion of the data center as more cabinets are added to the system and as network upgrades occur. The open-rack accessibility contributes to data center aesthetics by showcasing properly routed cables and improves network availability.

After finding the demo results from another supplier to be unsatisfactory, the company decided to consider jumper cabling and met with Panduit during the RFP process. Panduit introduced the QuickNet™ Plug Pack Assembly in each of the 39 telecom rooms to help facilitate quick and easy connections and to provide rapid patching application for the Cisco Catalyst 3850 switch. The mass plugging capability reduces the time and cost associated with installing and maintaining structured cabling links.

Category 6A copper cabling connects several of Cisco's higher band switches internally for maximum bandwidth, network reliability, and a migration path for future applications in Groupe SMA's data center and enterprise.

Panduit Mini-Com™ modular jacks, patch panels, and adapters were deployed across the installation, providing flexibility for Groupe SMA, simplifying moves, adds, and changes, and reducing operational expenses.

Business Benefits

With Panduit's help, Groupe SMA quickly and successfully moved from a location they had outgrown to a new one with a larger and more reliable data center in a very short time. The features of the new data center will also help reduce the cost of MACs in the future.

"The result meets our expectations and the solution is flexible enough to plug cable jumpers in various colors. For instance, in the framework of a specific need, instead of one cable for a jumper, the QuickNet connector is on every port of the switch," said Marais.

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