

CASE STUDY

Transforming Enterprise Connectivity: How Vodafone Helped GlobalRetail Group Achieve 40% Operational Cost Reduction

CLIENT GlobalRetail Group	INDUSTRY Retail & E-Commerce	REGION Europe & APAC	DURATION 18 Months (2023–2024)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GlobalRetail Group, one of Europe's leading omnichannel retailers with over 1,200 stores and operations across 14 countries, faced mounting pressure from outdated network infrastructure, fragmented connectivity, and escalating IT costs. Vodafone partnered with GlobalRetail Group to design and deploy a fully managed, SD-WAN-powered enterprise network — eliminating legacy MPLS dependency, streamlining operations, and enabling real-time analytics across all retail touchpoints.

The result: a 40% reduction in operational connectivity costs, 99.98% network uptime, and the digital foundation to support GlobalRetail's ambitious five-year growth strategy.

CLIENT BACKGROUND

GlobalRetail Group was founded in 1987 and has grown into a multinational retail powerhouse with revenue exceeding €8.4 billion in 2023. Operating across fashion, home goods, and electronics, the company serves over 35 million customers annually through physical stores, an award-winning mobile app, and a rapidly expanding e-commerce platform.

Despite impressive commercial performance, GlobalRetail's IT infrastructure had not kept pace with its growth. The company relied on a patchwork of legacy connectivity solutions — MPLS circuits, regional ISPs, and on-premise hardware — that were costly to maintain, difficult to scale, and incapable of supporting the real-time data demands of modern retail operations.

THE CHALLENGE

By early 2023, GlobalRetail's CTO identified three critical pain points threatening the company's competitive position:

CHALLENGE	BUSINESS IMPACT
Fragmented Network Infrastructure	37 separate ISP contracts across 14 countries resulted in inconsistent service quality, with average downtime of 4.2 hours per store per month — directly impacting POS availability and customer experience.
Escalating Connectivity Costs	Annual spend on network connectivity had grown by 28% over three years, driven by premium MPLS pricing and costly last-

Inability to Support Digital Transformation	mile provisioning. IT budget was increasingly consumed by 'keeping the lights on' rather than innovation.
	Plans for AI-powered inventory management, real-time analytics dashboards, and cloud-based POS systems were stalled due to insufficient bandwidth and lack of centralised network visibility.

THE VODAFONE SOLUTION

Following a comprehensive network audit conducted over six weeks, Vodafone's Enterprise Solutions team developed a bespoke connectivity roadmap built around four pillars:

1. Global SD-WAN Deployment

Vodafone replaced GlobalRetail's legacy MPLS infrastructure with a fully managed SD-WAN solution, leveraging Vodafone's global backbone network spanning 180+ countries. The new architecture intelligently routes traffic across broadband, 4G/5G, and private connections — prioritising business-critical applications such as POS systems and inventory management while reducing dependence on costly dedicated circuits.

2. Unified Network Management Platform

A single-pane-of-glass management portal replaced the 37 disparate ISP contracts and fragmented monitoring tools. GlobalRetail's IT team gained real-time visibility into network performance across all 1,200+ sites, with automated alerting, predictive fault detection powered by Vodafone AI, and self-healing capabilities that reduced manual intervention by 73%.

3. 5G-Ready Infrastructure & IoT Enablement

All new network endpoints were deployed as 5G-ready, positioning GlobalRetail to leverage ultra-low-latency connectivity for next-generation retail use cases including cashierless checkout, smart shelving, and augmented reality fitting rooms. Additionally, Vodafone's IoT platform was integrated to support 6,800 in-store sensors monitoring stock levels, energy consumption, and footfall analytics.

4. Dedicated Security & Compliance Layer

Given the retail sector's sensitivity to payment card data, Vodafone embedded a multi-layered security framework including SASE (Secure Access Service Edge), end-to-end encryption, and PCI-DSS compliant network segmentation. A 24/7 Security Operations Centre (SOC) provides continuous monitoring, with a guaranteed incident response time of under 15 minutes.

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

Recognising the operational risk of network disruption in a live retail environment, Vodafone adopted a phased, zero-downtime migration approach:

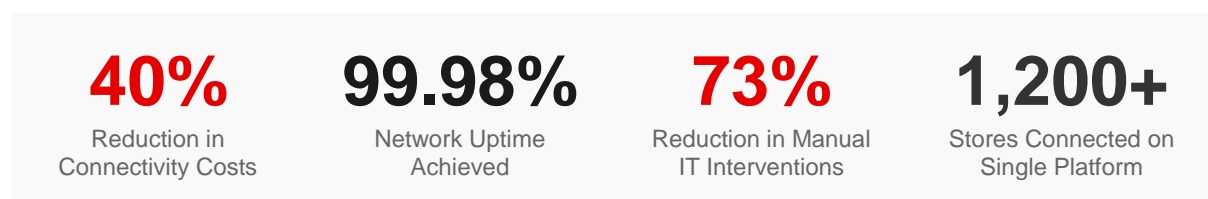
- Phase 1 (Months 1–4): Pilot deployment across 50 flagship stores in Germany and the UK, validating architecture and refining configuration templates.
- Phase 2 (Months 5–10): Accelerated rollout to remaining European stores, with dedicated Vodafone field engineers stationed in each country for on-site support.
- Phase 3 (Months 11–15): APAC expansion covering stores in Australia, Singapore, and Japan, with local regulatory compliance embedded into the network design.

- Phase 4 (Months 16–18): Legacy system decommissioning, final contract consolidation, and handover to Vodafone's Managed Services team for ongoing operations.

Throughout implementation, Vodafone maintained a joint programme management office with GlobalRetail's IT and procurement leadership, ensuring full transparency on milestones, risks, and budget adherence. The project was delivered on time and within 2% of the agreed budget.

RESULTS & BUSINESS IMPACT

The transformation delivered measurable, material results across financial performance, operational efficiency, and strategic capability:



Beyond the headline numbers, the programme delivered several strategic outcomes:

- Digital Transformation Unblocked: GlobalRetail successfully launched its AI-powered inventory management system in Q2 2024, reducing stockouts by 22% and overstock by 18%.
- Enhanced Customer Experience: POS availability improved from 96.1% to 99.7%, eliminating approximately 1.4 million customer transaction failures per year.
- Sustainability Gains: Consolidating and optimising network hardware reduced GlobalRetail's IT energy footprint by 19%, contributing to the company's 2030 carbon neutrality target.
- Future-Proof Platform: The 5G-ready infrastructure supports GlobalRetail's planned expansion into 3 new markets by 2026 without requiring additional network investment.

"Vodafone didn't just upgrade our network — they gave us a platform for the next decade of growth. The transition was seamless, the support was exceptional, and the results have exceeded every target we set. This partnership has fundamentally changed what's possible for GlobalRetail."

— Marco Bianchi, Chief Technology Officer, GlobalRetail Group

VODAFONE SOLUTIONS DEPLOYED

Vodafone SD-WAN Enterprise-grade software-defined networking	Vodafone Global WAN 180+ country backbone connectivity
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Vodafone Secure Net SASE & PCI-DSS compliant security	Vodafone IoT Platform 6,800+ sensor management & analytics
Vodafone Managed Services 24/7 NOC & SOC monitoring	Vodafone 5G Business 5G-ready infrastructure & private network

Find out how Vodafone can transform your enterprise connectivity.

Visit: www.vodafone.com/business | Email: enterprise@vodafone.com | Call: **+44 (0) 1635 33251**