

Casestudy

Flood of the Century in Ahrtal STIHL factory remained online



Disasters happen all the time, whether predictable or not, as happened on July 14, 2021, in the Ahr Valley in the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate.

In addition to human fates, such disasters inevitably entail infrastructural damage, affecting families, farmers and craftsmen, as well as industry.

The company STIHL Kettensägenwerken produces in this region fully automated with direct connection to the SAP for the production, magnesium housing for their worldwide until today unsurpassed STIHL chainsaws, but also for other manufacturers, such as BOSCH.

Of course, the STIHL factory was also affected by the flood of the century and the whole ground and LTE infrastructure of the German Telekom was not functioning. For more than 1 week.

The Head of IT at STIHL estimates the loss of production at this factory alone, and that without including the salaries of the employees, at a good 24,000 EUR per hour, if the robotic and via Internet automated factory machines cannot work.

Thanks to iQcom's Mobile WAN Service, the damage to STIHL was kept within reasonable limits. Within 7 hours, the MobileWAN device including external antennas as well as STIHL's own firewall, which is preconfigured for such scenarios, was transported by car to the factory in the flood hazards from the global emergency container at STIHL Switzerland.

By the evening of July 15, STIHL's production was reconnected to the SAP and was able to resume production of its precision magnesium housings, while surrounding factories were at a standstill for more than a week.

After this incident, the STIHL group decided to equip its system-relevant sites worldwide with iQcom's SDWAN solution, including 2 of STIHL's data centers. Sometimes it takes a disaster to put the technological advantage of a solution to the test.

Mr. Thomas Wendelgass, responsible for the global Emergency Container, said afterwards: No technology enthusiast would wish for a catastrophic event like the one in the Ahr Valley, especially since such accidents have far-reaching consequences for the immediate environment and industry.

Luck was on our side to keep the production downtime very short, since on the one hand we at STIHL are equipped for such emergency concepts, and on the other hand we have a great cooperation with the company iQcom, which in this particular case paid off even more and is part of this emergency concept.

Key Figures Emergency KIT

- iQcom Go2 Router with 2x 3-5G SIM modems, WAN and LAN
- L2/L3 IPv4 tunneling as managed bonding service from iQcom
- Mono Firewall with Policy Push from parent company

Key Figures Costs

If you extrapolate the costs per hour of production downtime from 24,000 euros to 7x24, i.e. one week, the Managed Bonding solution from iQcom prevented a production loss of 4 million euros. This led the management to expand the cooperation with iQcom. And to do so globally. In the meantime, several other sites have already been equipped with it. The SDWAN solution also offers some security aspects in terms of cyber security, making company networks less vulnerable to attack and making a major contribution to eavesdropping security.

Contact

- **STIHL Kettenwerke & Co**, Zweigniederlassung WIL/Schweiz
Mr. Thomas Wendelgass, Leiter, Phone: +41 71 913 93 82
- **iQcom (Schweiz) GmbH**,
Mr. André Grüter, Leiter Technik & Pre Sales, Phone +41 58 600 00 12



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