



LOVESPACE

LOVESPACE®

Location
UK

Industry
Services

Website
www.lovespace.co.uk

Solution
SD-WAN from Aptum

COMPANY OVERVIEW

LOVESPACE has been collecting and taking care of hundreds of thousands of items since 2012. The company, founded by entrepreneurs Brett Akkar and Steve Folwell, is the UK's first storage by the box service, offering collection and delivery nationwide. It's an award-winning, convenient and cheap alternative to self-storage.

Like other shared economy business models such as Uber or Airbnb, LOVESPACE uses technology to connect its customers with 'pay-as-you-store' storage space. Customers book storage space online and LOVESPACE shows up at the door to collect the items to be stored at one of the company's secure, video-camera monitored warehouses. When the owner is ready to retrieve the items, the LOVESPACE delivery team will return them to their new home. LOVESPACE has now partnered with 30+ universities across the UK to provide students with simple storage solutions and has recently expanded its services to include e-fulfillment and storage of larger items such as furniture. LOVESPACE's business is growing at a phenomenal rate. In the last three years, revenues have soared from £300,000 to £2.4M. This growth is made possible in part by the company's flexible warehouse strategy and innovative in-house technology which allows LOVESPACE to quickly plug in courier partners and scale up rapidly.



BUSINESS CHALLENGE

A compressed business cycle and seasonal peaks create scaling issues

When the company first started out, it was using a self-managed server to manage its technology infrastructure but rapid growth necessitated change, explains David Walker, CTO of LOVESPACE. “Being the first and best in a new sector always helps in gaining market traction, but we began to hit scale issues around the smart deployment of technology due to our rapid growth,” says Walker. “We needed to build a business and infrastructure that would not break when demand floods in.”

The original strategy of LOVESPACE was for full ownership of its storage units, but three years ago the company began using partners — venues with spare storage capacity — allowing it to weather and adapt to seasonal peaks in business. For instance, during its peak seasons, when students are starting and leaving college, the company will operate between 100 to 200 distribution centers across the UK, only to fall back to 70 distribution centers during mid-season.

“The move from a wholly owned to a variable cost model meant we needed quick networking deployment and plug-in boxes because our business cycle can be so compressed,” explains Walker. Use of third-party distribution centers also had implications for security among other things and brought new risks and contract obligations. The business model created several IT challenges for the business:

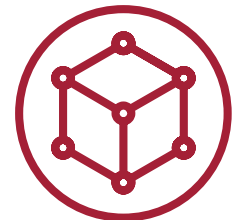
1. LOVESPACE required a solution that was more flexible than the traditional managed services model.
2. It requires a plug-and-play connectivity infrastructure that could be easily set up, easily self-managed, and enable point-to-point PC and handheld connectivity to the company’s cloud-based applications (loyalty program, website, point of sale transactions) and business applications such as the company’s enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.
3. LOVESPACE also needed to apply different tiers of access and control in different locations.

“We were attracted to the potential of Software-Defined Wide Area Networking (SD-WAN); drawn to the solution’s affordability, scalability and ease of installation. A flexible and agile SD-WAN model is ideally suited to geographically distributed offices that need to access, manage and optimize communications between various locations. Because LOVESPACE scales to cover peak times by renting space in other distribution centers, a traditional network was not a viable option.”

– Dave Walker, Chief Technology Officer,
Lovespace

CONNECTIVITY

FastFiber Network® speeds without boundaries. Deliver applications and data wherever your employees and customers need them. Benefit from fast, secure and reliable connectivity solutions without compromising data privacy.





THE SOLUTION

A flexible and agile SD-WAN model to accommodate business variability

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LOVESPACE had a strong existing service provider relationship with Aptum, a global provider of business-to-business products and services including colocation, network connectivity, hosting, cloud and managed IT. Since 2015 Aptum has partnered with LOVESPACE to provide backup and disaster recovery services and protection against denial of service attacks (DDoS). So Aptum was LOVESPACE's natural first choice for SD-WAN connectivity.

"We chose SD-WAN from Aptum for its flexibility, security and simplicity of management," says Dave Walker. "If a third party wants to plug in, we can control every aspect and ensure the right ports are opened. This centralized control is crucial, as we have warehousing from the Scottish Highlands, to downtown London, to Cornwall.

SD-WAN

Simple, secure and agile enterprise-grade WAN connection. SD-WAN is the perfect solution for companies with distributed branch office locations using cloud-based applications.



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Lovespace

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Easy to architect and manage network connections

Thanks to Aptum's SD-WAN solution, LOVESPACE's IT team is easily able to architect and manage secure network connections to branch locations as the business grows. Because branch traffic data is not required to be back hauled to a private WAN, data can be sent directly from branch site to branch site over the underlying broadband internet location using SD-WAN. Says Walker, "We have two main sites that we own, plus other trusted sites. We can give a site full access to a data center, or else set up a more limited version – and we can control all those network choices centrally."

"We have the in-house software development team to re-architect our solution on the fly. This allows us to manage in different ways without needing an on-premises hardware install. We are a small business still but have enterprise-level needs. We need to be able to manage networking traffic right across Europe with secure handovers of data. SD-WAN gives us that control. If we want to have a small server in Portugal that replicates our central logistics controls it is straightforward. Aptum's SD-WAN software gives us that point-to-point network system.



Expertise and support to count on

In Aptum, Walker and his in-house team not only have a reliable SD-WAN solution, they know they have a partner they can count on for expertise and support. “We have an external support team that knows just what to do if something goes awry,” says Walker. “Having this system means we can provide support for instant storage opportunities, for instance, warehousing for retailers in their busy periods like Christmas and Black Friday promotions.

Use of Aptum’s SD-WAN solution has ensured that LOVESPACE is no longer restricted by on-premise infrastructure and can scale effortlessly as customer numbers are doubling year-on-year.

“With Aptum’s support, we have built out a business model to scale when the need demands,” says David Walker. “There is no limit. Practically, this means we are always on top of the business so we can always be on the customer’s doorstep the next day, wherever they are, and regardless of what else is going on in the business. We have discovered that our customers test our service in so many different ways. To ensure we deliver the best experience possible we need a technology partner that is flexible enough to support us when we need to make infrastructure changes for new processes, new technologies, or new locations coming on stream. This is what Aptum does for us.”

WHY NOT PUT APTUM TO WORK FOR YOU?

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www.aptum.com

ABOUT APTUM TECHNOLOGIES

Aptum Technologies enables customers to unlock the potential of their data infrastructure to drive tangible business outcomes and maximize the value of their technology investments. Aptum’s Data Center, Cloud, Hosting and Connectivity solutions, underpinned with expert Managed and Professional Services, offer genuine choice and adaptability combined with international reach spanning North America, Latin America and Europe. In Canada, through its Fiber business, Aptum is the first neutral host provider of turnkey small cell connectivity, augmenting an extensive metro network across Toronto and Montreal. Aptum is a portfolio company of Digital Colony, a global investment firm dedicated to strategic opportunities in digital infrastructure. For more information, visit www.aptum.com.