

# Asian Paints Leverages Force10 Technology to Support its Growing Application Landscape and Expanding Global Distribution Network

## Customer PROFILE

**Customer**  
Asian Paints

**asianpaints**

**Industry**  
Paint Manufacturer

**Application**  
Data Center

**Highlights**  
Asian Paints is using the Force10 C150 switch as its network backbone to support its growing application landscape and its expanding global distribution network.



Asian Paints operates various manufacturing facilities throughout the world; the company implemented the Force10 C150 to keep up with expansion and set the stage for future growth.

Asian Paints is India's largest and Asia's third largest paint company today with revenues of INR44 billion (around \$1.1 billion). Throughout this decade, its domestic business grew rapidly as a result of increasing demand from Asian Paints' growing domestic and international distribution networks. Additional growth also came internationally from a series of acquisitions in third-world developing markets. Today, the company operates in 20 countries and has 28 paint manufacturing facilities in the world, servicing consumers in more than 65 countries.

Challenges caused by the speed and scope of the Asian Paints' growth did not create the prettiest of pictures. To keep up with this expansion and implement a network foundation for future growth, Asian Paints deployed the C-Series resilient switch from Force10 Networks.

### Rapid Expansion Creates IT Challenges

Asian Paints transitioned from running decentralized custom-built software to support its operations by adopting more centralized packaged applications, such as SAP R/3 for

its transaction backbone, the i2 suite for supply chain planning and a host of other packages. While it created a significant number of additional possibilities to implement systems and cross-system integration, the rapidly growing application landscape led to higher data volumes. The centralization also created a new hue of criticality to its application and network infrastructure.

Acknowledging that hindsight is 20/20, M.R. Parasuram, chief manager of IT at Asian Paints, believes that in their eagerness to implement and integrate new functionality to help its employees gain more unified information, the network infrastructure was not adequately maintained.

Over time, its data center LAN architecture was stressed and the IT staff's confidence in solving problems was eroding. The company's data center is responsible for the arduous task of hosting all of Asian Paints application systems and includes approximately 80 servers, as well as firewalls, VPN concentrators, VoIP servers and Internet proxies. Approximately 4,000 end-users from remote offices connect to the data center on WAN links to access the



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**M.R. Parasuram**  
Chief manager of IT  
Asian Paints



*The Force10 C150 is at the forefront of the Asian Paints data center, which is responsible for the arduous task of hosting all of the company's application systems.*

hosted applications. Staff also supports a few connectivity options, such as 250 point-to-point private WAN links, and VPNs.

Feeling a sense of urgency to tackle these immediate issues, implement a robust and secure architecture, as well as provision capacity for the coming 18–24 months, Parasuram's group wanted to solidify its network core by deploying more robust switching capability.

### Requirements of Every Color

To meet the growing needs of the business and have that capacity to provision for the future, Asian Paints had distinct requirements to ensure network performance, reliability and scalability. From a performance perspective, Asian Paints required line-rate speed to prevent any kind of network bottleneck as well as a non-intrusive way to analyze network traffic.

“We also needed uninterrupted interconnectivity 24 by 7 by 365 since it is potentially the largest point of failure within the data center LAN,” Parasuram explains. “So we wanted complete redundancy in all of its active components in order to reduce the chance of any outage.”

To ensure its infrastructure would scale as the company's data volumes continue to grow, the company required port density and the ability to aggregate ports.

### Meeting the Parameters

As the only device to meet all of the company's technical parameters, the Asian Paints IT staff selected the Force10 C150 resilient switch to power its data center. For example, as the only single-chassis design evaluated, the IT staff believed that the C150 lessens the chance of configuration errors and provides simplified troubleshooting.

With up to 192 ports with line-rate, non-blocking Gigabit Ethernet (GbE) and 10 GbE capabilities, the C150 represented a tremendous performance improvement over Asian Paints' legacy switches.

IT staff acknowledged that performance gains could be nullified if their network was hit by an outage, resulting in significant downtime. The C150 features a high-availability architecture that provides built-in redundancy, including the switch fabric, backplane, power supply and cooling components.

“Our legacy switch was essentially a 100 Mbps switch with a few Gigabit Ethernet ports, so even though the servers had Gigabit NICs, the switch was limiting the throughput on the LAN,” says Parasuram. “The C150 is fully populated with Gigabit Ethernet ports, so there was an immediate tangible increase in the LAN throughput, and we now have spare switching capacity.”

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### M.R. Parasuram

Chief manager of IT  
Asian Paints



*Approximately 4,000 end users from remote offices connect to the data center on WAN links, powered by the Force10 C150, to access the hosted applications.*

Having that kind of port density on the C150 proved cost effective enough for their IT staff to place another C150 at their disaster recovery site instead of locating at its primary site. This underscores the additional flexibility they noticed, which made their IT operations “definitely more agile and efficient than in the past,” according to M.R. Parasuram.

“Since we adopted server virtualization technologies earlier this year, we have had the capability to provision server resources literally on demand. The C150 switch provided the network capacity to support on-demand server provisioning.

Like framing a picture, having an efficient, well-coordinated implementation is the final critical step to having a next-generation network backbone quickly deployed to satisfy the needs of the business for today and tomorrow.”

“There was great commitment to our time lines, and since we were approaching our peak selling season in India at the time, it was extremely important for us to transition to the new switch well in advance,” recalls Parasuram. “We were

implementing some configurations for the first time, such as port aggregation. While all of this required detailed planning, preparation and documentation from the teams and individuals involved, it was performed so well by Force10 engineers that we had the new switch successfully implemented with a down time window of just two hours.”

### Looking Ahead

With the Force10 C150 resilient switch deployed, the IT staff is now confident that its network infrastructure will continue to seamlessly scale to meet the growing business needs of the enterprise. This capability, coupled with additional flexibility and network control, has given the IT staff confidence that they can provide greater value to the company. For example, they have started working on deploying video conferencing.

“Since we are now well equipped to undertake this initiative, we are contemplating rolling out these facilities to a larger set of users within the enterprise,” Parasuram adds.

Paint them as ready for the future.



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