



Post-Divestiture Global Growth:

How SonicWall navigated international expansion & corporate change with the help of an Employer of Record

About the customer

The internet can be a dangerous place. Hidden behind one-click shopping and cat videos lies the very real threat of malware, ransomware, viruses, and criminal hacking groups. Fortunately, SonicWall's Boundless Cybersecurity platform safeguards organizations with seamless protection against cyberattacks.

From its early days as an innovator in SMB network security, to its decade as a public company, its five years as part of Dell, and the past five years of private ownership since divestiture, SonicWall has seen a number of organizational changes during its 30-year history. When the time came following the Dell divestiture to set up new systems and processes to manage employees scattered throughout Europe and Asia, there was only one obvious answer: working with an Employer of Record (EOR).

Starting from scratch is hard. Restarting when you are big and growing can be even harder

After SonicWall's organizational changes, the Vice Presidents of Global Human Resources, Bryce Ashcraft and Sarah Chapman, had a big task ahead: setting up everything an HR department has to manage, including recruiting systems and onboarding processes.

"We had to basically build from the ground up at the same time we were experiencing unprecedented international growth," said Ashcraft. "The challenge was, essentially, that you've got a company that has existed for 25-plus years, and we've got to continue supporting the operations and managing our talent as seamlessly as possible."

But things get even more complicated when you consider that over its 25-plus years, SonicWall had already established local presences in many countries. This meant that newly transitioned SonicWall employees were located all over the world.

"Part of our need for an Employer of Record was because, particularly in Europe and Asia, we had a lot of different regions where we had a relatively small sales office, and we weren't going to set up a legal entity in those areas," Ashcraft explained.

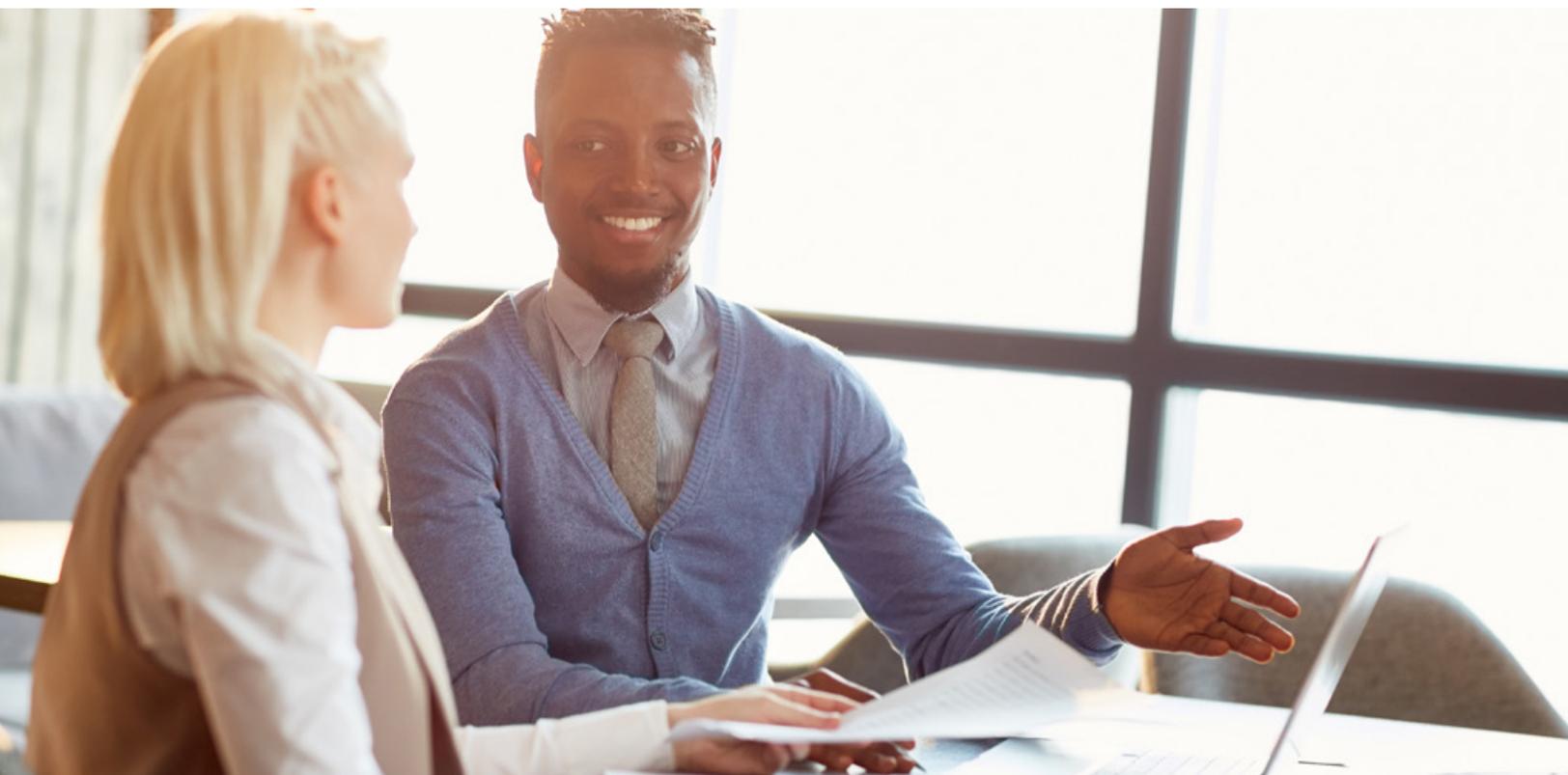
How an EOR helped SonicWall's HR department during the ups and downs

Companies that thrive are those willing to embrace change. In the case of SonicWall, that meant approaching a different type of client than they were used to — but that had consequences.

"We've gone through several strategic changes as we have continued to add to our portfolio of cybersecurity solutions and are increasingly focusing on government and enterprise customers," Ashcraft said. "That meant that we also had to shift our talent by developing internal talent and adding new people with the skill sets to match our evolving needs."

Navigating talent management is always hard, but it can become a major challenge when you have people in different countries, each with different laws and cultures. Working with a global EOR helped SonicWall through this process while minimizing risk.

"The legalities of doing business in some of these countries – that's where we've seen a lot of benefits [from using Globalization Partners]. And then, just the day-to-day administration ... that piece is so valuable to us," Ashcraft said.



Globalization Partners makes hiring the best talent easy, no matter where they are

SonicWall's experience with Globalization Partners was a testament to how a global Employer of Record can act as an expert advisor to organizations going through change. Once SonicWall started experiencing the benefits, hiring new, highly specialized talent became an easier-than-ever task.

"Being able to rely on Globalization Partners is how can we get people in the door as fast as possible." Remembering how ambitious their initial hiring goals were, Ashcraft added, "In our first quarter of 2019, we set extremely ambitious hiring goals, expecting that we may have set the bar too high. But then we met those goals on time. And I think part of that is the emphasis that our leadership places on getting the right talent."

Now, SonicWall can open up the world map and start looking for talent anywhere. That's why, for example, they were able to move into new markets, such as Eastern Europe, where they previously had no established employee presence.

"Each country is going to be different in terms of its laws. But we just hadn't really had any talent in the Eastern Europe area. And being able to rely on expertise and efficiency, those two things were very, very important to us," Ashcraft said.

Selecting the right EOR is key

There are two types of Employer of Record companies: companies using the aggregator model and companies using a wholly owned infrastructure model. If you work with an EOR that uses the aggregator model, your employees could deal with a different third-party provider in each country.

"The wholly owned infrastructure model is really, really important for us because there were so many errors, including miscommunication with subcontractors, under another service provider. And we just couldn't afford to have mistakes like that, because if there's a mistake, it has a very real impact on the lives of our employees," Ashcraft said.



Experience makes all the difference

Globalization Partners is one of the earliest providers of global EOR services. When a company has an urgent need for support dealing with an issue regarding one of their international hires, that experience could make a huge difference.

"We had a few countries under Globalization Partners when we split from Dell, but the larger balance was with another provider," explained Ashcroft. "However, Globalization Partners quickly proved to be our go-to partner because of their commitment to service, attention to detail, investments in technology, and excellent communication. As time went on, we eventually standardized around Globalization Partners and have never looked back."



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