

## Networking Leadership Brief

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## How a Global Investment Firm Modernized Its Network and Saved Millions with Alkira

### Highlights:

- **Alkira delivers a globally distributed, cloud-delivered network infrastructure fabric.** This fabric is accessed through Cloud Exchange Points (CXPs), with centralized policy, segmentation, and security controls across clouds and regions.
- **Alkira's Network Infrastructure-as-a-Service (NlaaS) enables enterprises to replace fixed, hardware-based WANs with an on-demand, consumption-based network that reduces capex, lowers operating costs, and accelerates deployment.** Without software or hardware to deploy, global infrastructure can be established in less than one hour.
- **This Leadership Brief examines how a global investment firm used Alkira's NlaaS to modernize its global cloud and WAN architecture.** The transformation reduced network operating costs by more than 75 percent while improving performance, reliability, and operational control across the firm's global footprint.

# 1. Intro: Why a Global Investment Firm Modernized Its Network for the Cloud

For a global investment firm managing a globally diversified portfolio across public markets, private assets, and infrastructure, cloud adoption is not an IT upgrade. It is a performance requirement. Data-heavy research, risk modeling, and quantitative analytics teams need fast, consistent, and secure access to cloud platforms and services across regions. That makes the network a foundational dependency for how the business operates day to day.

As the firm modernized core platforms and expanded its cloud footprint, it found its legacy WAN, built on proprietary hardware and expensive leased circuits, could not keep pace with cloud-first needs. The organization chose to modernize both its applications and its WAN to gain the agility, scalability, and cost structure required for global cloud operations.

Futuriom spoke with the firm about how it addressed these requirements and implemented Alkira as a Network Infrastructure-as-a-Service (NlaaS) platform to connect its cloud environments, regional offices, and external partners. Alkira provides a cloud-hosted network fabric that enables enterprises to program connectivity, routing, segmentation, and security policies across multicloud and hybrid environments from a centralized control plane.

According to the firm's technical lead for network, cloud, and security, this approach allowed the organization to modernize its WAN while gaining the speed, flexibility, and cost structure required to support global cloud operations.

Let's dive in and see how this happened.

## 2. Refactoring the Network for Global Operations

For a global investment organization, cloud transformation only works if the network evolves with it. Trading, analytics, and portfolio systems are data-intensive, latency-sensitive, and tightly coupled to external market data providers, SaaS platforms, and internal services spread across regions. In that operating reality, network performance, data integrity, and compliance are not “nice to have.” They are prerequisites for the business.

As the firm accelerated cloud adoption, it needed an infrastructure model that could deliver consistent application performance and security controls globally, while also making it easier to connect to multiple cloud providers and external partners through regional on-ramps. Those requirements pushed the organization to modernize in parallel: refactor applications for cloud-first delivery and replace a legacy WAN model that was too rigid and too expensive for cloud-era operations.

### Re-platforming and Refactoring to be Cloud-first

According to the firm’s technical lead for network, cloud, and security, the organization began expanding cloud usage about five years ago and quickly concluded that simply “lifting and shifting” would not be enough. The team adopted a pragmatic version of the “5Rs” approach (rehost, re-platform, refactor, rebuild, and replace), moving workloads from private virtualized infrastructure to cloud services, including VMs and containerized applications.

“We had to accelerate our cloud adoption,” he said.

That acceleration included a major reduction in virtual machine footprint and a deliberate shift from bespoke legacy applications to off-the-shelf SaaS where it made sense. The goal was to move from running and maintaining large-scale infrastructure to consuming cloud-native platforms that can scale faster, update more reliably, and integrate more easily with external services and data sources.

“We chose not to just move everything to the cloud,” he said. “We wanted to rebuild some of the things on Kubernetes. And we decided the vendors should run some of the infrastructure.”

In practice, this also meant moving certain partner software platforms to run as tenants in cloud services, particularly specialist and analytics platforms.

This approach shifted the firm from running and maintaining large-scale infrastructure to consuming cloud-native platforms that could scale, update, and integrate more quickly with external data sources and services.

## **The Network was Critical**

As the firm moved core investment and analytics platforms to the cloud, the network quickly became the bottleneck. These workloads are data-intensive and tightly integrated with external data sources, partner platforms, and internal systems, so any variability in latency, throughput, or security controls directly impacts performance and operational confidence.

The organization also wasn't standardizing on a single cloud. It was building primarily on Microsoft Azure, while maintaining workloads in AWS and supporting additional use cases that required Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI). That multi-cloud reality exposed how brittle the legacy connectivity model had become.

"We predominately landed in Microsoft Azure," said the firm's technical lead for network, cloud, and security. "We had parts of our business in AWS. We had other use cases in the company that wanted to use OCI. We were looking in dismay at the architecture of the network, building IPsec tunnels and running legacy telco around it."

To remove the constraint, the firm needed a cloud-aligned network model that could scale across regions and clouds without turning every expansion into another tunnel buildout or another carrier dependency. Alkira's cloud-hosted network fabric, deterministic mesh design, and built-in security were key factors, but the operational win was speed: the team could stand up connectivity and attach regional cloud on-ramps in weeks, not quarters. That accelerated migration timelines and freed engineering cycles previously spent maintaining the legacy WAN and its growing web of point-to-point connections.

## **Cost of Networking Was Key**

Cost from legacy telecom services were another major constraint on the global investment firm's cloud strategy. As the firm's technical lead explained, traditional MPLS-based networks were expensive, inflexible, and poorly aligned with cloud operating models.

"The days of private MPLS were over [for us]. It's not as invaluable as it once was," said the network lead. "There is a super Internet—connectivity among clouds. It's very reliable and very high performance. I'm not saying our business should depend on the Internet. But should leverage the Internet where we see hot spots," the network lead added.

To address these cost and flexibility issues, the firm selected Alkira's Network Infrastructure-as-a-Service, which provides a cloud-hosted network fabric accessed through Cloud Exchange Points (CXPs). Alkira allows enterprises to abstract and program connectivity across hyperscale clouds, private data centers, and SD-WAN environments using a centralized control plane, rather than relying on fixed telecom circuits and proprietary hardware.

Using Alkira, the global investment organization connected its regional operations in Northern Europe, Western Europe, and the Middle East to the cloud providers it required in each location, including Microsoft Azure and Amazon Web Services, through CXPs deployed in those regions.

“We connect those into the two [Alkira] CXPs. This allows a lot more flexibility. We haven't really needed to scale up bandwidth.”

Beyond cost, the firm’s technical lead said the new model with modern Infrastructure as Code (IaC) capabilities significantly improved operational agility.

“It’s IaC friendly so we can do things a lot more quickly,” said the technical lead. “We became faster and more predictable with less frustration on the development side of the house.”

## **A New Cloud Skillset**

As the firm adopted a cloud-first operating model, it also transformed how its network teams worked. The move to infrastructure-as-code and cloud-native networking required new skills centered on automation, policy, and software-driven operations.

“I have been able to take CCIE engineers and convert them to cloud engineers. It provided for the team members to shift into that mindset. For engineers making that transition, it's great.”

According to the firm’s technical lead, this shift made the network significantly easier to operate, as engineers moved away from manual command-line configuration toward programmable, code-based workflows aligned with cloud platforms.

In parallel, the modernization delivered meaningful cost benefits.

“We were spending \$2 million [a year] on legacy telco, and it was too rigid,” the firm’s technical lead added.

The technical lead described the local legacy telecom suppliers as a monopoly, charging them very high prices for basic connectivity.

"Where my firm is located, the cost of bandwidth is through the roof," the lead said. "Telecom costs are really high."

The technical lead said that after evaluating multiple SD-WAN and connectivity options, many were ruled out because they required significant upfront investment and did not support infrastructure-as-code operating models. Alkira’s Network Infrastructure-as-a-Service provided a more flexible, cloud-aligned alternative.

## 75% in Network Savings

Using Alkira, the global investment firm connected its regional operations and cloud environments through Cloud Exchange Points, supporting bandwidth in the range of 1 to 1.5 Gbps per region without the need for fixed telecom contracts.

As a result, the firm reduced its annual network spend from approximately \$2 million to \$400,000, a savings of more than 75 percent, while gaining a more flexible and cloud-aligned global network architecture.

### Key Stat:

Alkira NlaaS reduced annual network costs from \$2 million to \$400,000, savings of more than 75%.

The network lead summarized the decision simply: “When you combine the cost considerations with the cloud-friendly architecture of Alkira, it was an easy decision. When we wrapped it all up and reported to leadership, it was a good story.”

### 3. Conclusion: A Cloud-Native Network Model with Measurable Business Impact

Based on its analysis of Alkira deployments, including conversation with the global investment firm and analyzing prior customer studies, Futuriom finds that Network Infrastructure-as-a-Service (NlaaS) is emerging as a viable alternative to traditional hardware-centric WAN architectures. In a previous case study, Futuriom documented how Michaels used Alkira to rapidly connect more than 1,000 retail locations. The global investment firm's deployment further demonstrates how the same model can support highly regulated, data-intensive financial environments.

Across these deployments, Alkira's NlaaS model combines cloud-hosted network infrastructure with centralized policy, automation, and security controls. This allows enterprises to move away from fixed telecom contracts and proprietary appliances toward a programmable, consumption-based network that aligns with cloud operating models and infrastructure-as-code workflows.

Some key benefits of Alkira include the following:

**Fast, intent-based provisioning.** Users can express high-level intent-based policies for performance and security. Alkira automates routing, segmentation, path selection, and connectivity setup across the global fabric.

**AI-assisted Operations.** Alkira uses AI and machine learning to help with policy generation, anomaly detection, troubleshooting recommendations, and automated remediation pathways.

**Policy and Security Automation.** The platform automatically enforces segmentation, firewall insertion, service chaining, and traffic inspection across clouds—reducing manual configuration needs.

**Data-Driven Insights.** Alkira uses logs, topology context, performance metrics, and route intelligence to auto-diagnose issues.

Futuriom finds that Alkira's cloud-hosted network fabric and centralized policy model help enterprises deliver consistent connectivity and segmentation across clouds, regions, and sites without relying on hardware-centric WAN designs. This approach will be attractive to many customers looking at a cloud-based NaaS operating model that can provide more flexible multicloud and distributed application connectivity with an economical, asset-like deployment model.