



“The demand for business switches is increasing. Over the last three years, we have more than doubled our fully managed switch sales in Switzerland – especially for system integrators in the audio-video sector, where we have in fact quadrupled our sales.”

Company name:
 Concept Communication GmbH

Industry:
 Media

Company website:
 concept.ch

Geographic region:
 Zurich, Switzerland

NETGEAR Hardware delivers AV hockey experience that’s in a league of its own

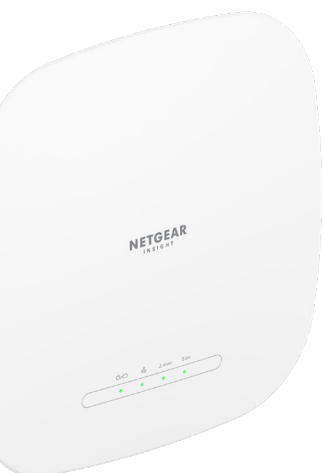
This season, GCK Lions hockey fans will be offered a completely new experience at KEK in Küsnacht (Zurich). The GCK Lions have given the ice rink a technical upgrade in the form of new NETGEAR hardware. A look behind the scenes shows how a NETGEAR network is revolutionising Swiss hockey.

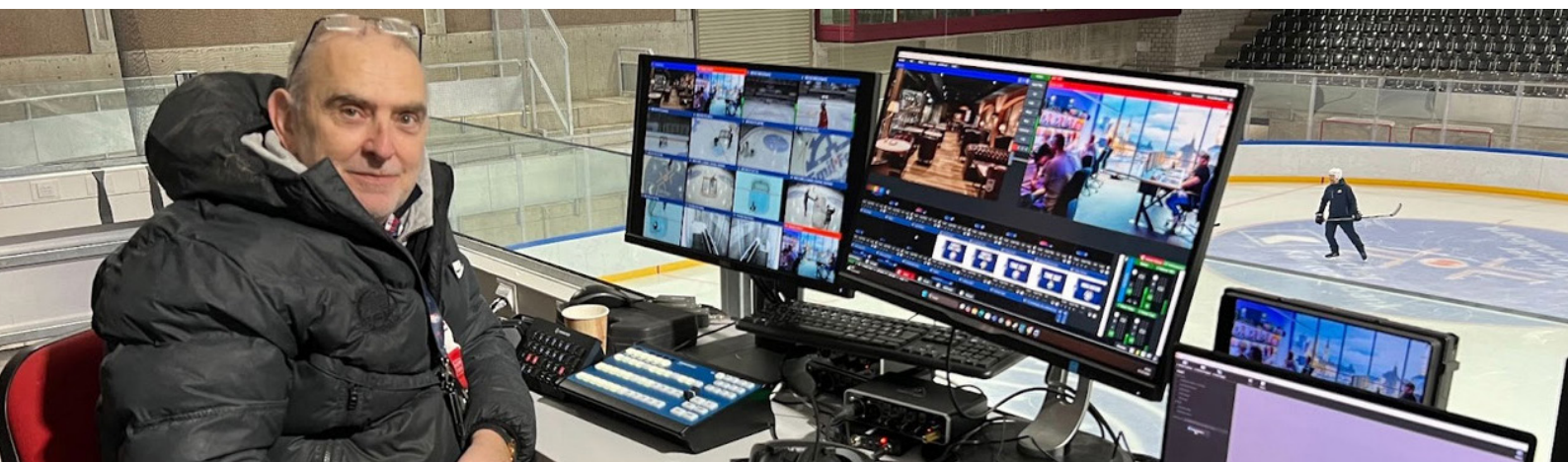
“The demand for business switches is increasing. Over the last three years, we have more than doubled our fully managed switch sales in Switzerland – especially for system integrators in the audio-video sector, where we have in fact quadrupled our sales,” says Michael Schäfer, Country Manager at NETGEAR Switzerland. “This is also reflected at market level: In the IT network market, excluding the AV sector, growth was also significantly stronger than the market as a whole, reaching 20%. We were therefore able to gain a greater market share as well as more than double the number of system integrators in the last three years.”

In Switzerland, 348 system integrators are currently using NETGEAR products for their network solutions business. These are mostly providers of complete multimedia solutions such as Kilchenmann AG, AUVISO Audio Visual Solutions AG, B + T BILD + TON AG, Ganz Supravisio AG and Lemavisio SA. The share of project business has risen significantly and is now slightly higher than run-rate sales or annual run-rate sales. Technical upgrades are becoming more relevant for larger AV projects in various market verticals such as education, broadcasting, digital signage, events, medical operating theatres, and command and control centres.

A new trend is emerging in the sport sector. Most recently, the Ambri hockey rink in the Gottardo Arena has received a NETGEAR technical upgrade. Thanks to technical AV upgrades, sporting events in German-speaking Switzerland are also reaching a new level of experience and business. An example of this is the KEK hockey arena in Küsnacht, which began the new season using NETGEAR hardware – and therefore a complete network management solution.

At the start of the season, Kurt Schumacher, TV producer for the GCK Lions at KEK Küsnacht, has offered an initial tour of the Küsnacht artificial ice rink and explains what’s behind the technical upgrade and what expectations are connected with the new IT network.



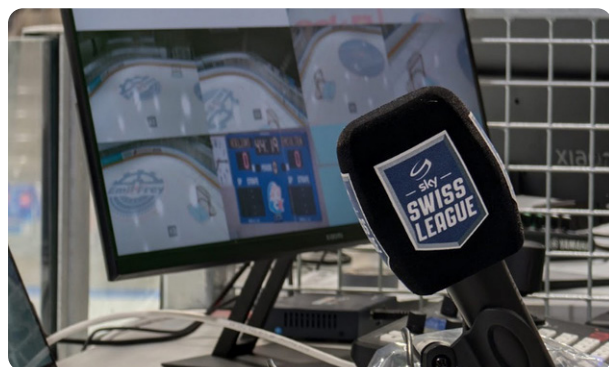


WHY IS AN IT NETWORK NECESSARY FOR A HOCKEY ARENA?

The sport is gaining popularity – even off the ice. On the one hand, there are the die-hard hockey fans who regularly head to the ice rink to watch a game. On the other hand, the younger generation increasingly wants to watch games online and maintain the flexibility to watch certain games live. We have received this feedback from the fans and would like to give this target group what they demand. Swiss League TV brings in fans from far and wide – whether they're on vacation or sitting on the couch at home.

TO WHAT EXTENT IS THIS ALSO IMPORTANT FOR BUSINESS AT THE ICE RINK?

In addition to Swiss League TV, the Swiss Ice Hockey Federation (SIHF) along with the Swiss League has now also won Sky Sports as a signal receiver and advertising partner. This helps us to reach the new target group. But it is also important to provide excellent image quality. In this regard, today's demands are extremely high due to the habitual use of the Internet – this means you have to provide the fans with the best experience by means of multiple camera settings. Otherwise, such effort just isn't worth it.



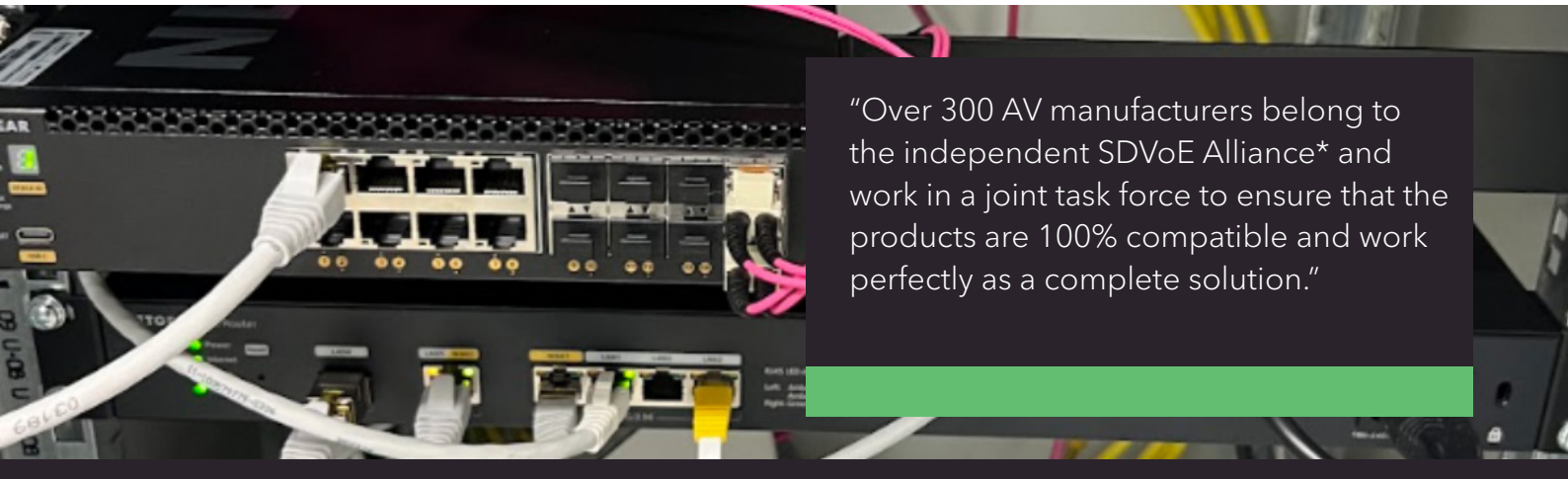
WHICH TECHNOLOGY HAS BEEN NEWLY INSTALLED AND HOW IS THE ARENA NOW NETWORKED?

We use the M4350-8X8F fully managed switch as a core switch. That is indeed a core element. On a technical level, nothing can be done without it. Since its installation, live streams, microphones, cameras and screens have been running without jitter or delay. All of this is made possible by an interplay of other switches: For example, it is also necessary for us to use an M4350-12X12F as a studio and laboratory switch, an MS108EUP for our workstations, and a WAX615 wireless AP, which provides high speed and capacity with WiFi 6 and enterprise-class security. A total of eight NETGEAR products are in use at the ice rink, which work together like gears in a Swiss watch. That's why NETGEAR technical support was crucial at the beginning. Because if a device does not perform, the entire network will not work. The switches are reliable and this is critical to success during sporting events.

WHERE IS THE NETGEAR HARDWARE LOCATED?

The core switch is located in the basement – safely stored behind solid bunker doors. In the arena, we connected the WAX615 wireless access point and the other switches in the camera area and at our control desk. NETGEAR Engage is the AV user interface. This enables automatic discovery of M4250, M4300 and M4350 switches for easy and centralised management.





“Over 300 AV manufacturers belong to the independent SDVoE Alliance* and work in a joint task force to ensure that the products are 100% compatible and work perfectly as a complete solution.”

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED AT THE START OF THE NEW SEASON AND HOW IS THIS MAKING ITSELF FELT?

Since the season’s start, the experience has changed. Some visitors even watch on their mobile phones while they are sitting in the arena, simply because the resolution and image quality capture every detail, and additional views and replays are available – in this sport, every second counts. This can only be done if the transmission speed is correct. That’s where NETGEAR hardware plays its part. The feedback from visitors has been extremely positive.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE AV UPGRADE FOR THE GCK LIONS AT KEK?

Image and audio quality is critical to our viewers. Due to our location, we have limited parking. In addition, the arena can accommodate a maximum of 1500 visitors. This technical upgrade helps us to increase the number of spectators and get them excited about the ice rink – even if they are not on site. This increases the odds that fans will come to a game one day, on their own or as part of a family activity.



The SDVoE Alliance* is a non-profit consortium of technology providers that work together to standardise the use of Ethernet to transmit AV signals in professional AV environments and to create an ecosystem around SDVoE technology that enables the software to define AV applications. Steering members of the SDVoE Alliance* include Black Box, Christie Digital, IDK Corporation, NETGEAR, Semtech and ZeeVee.

HOW DO GCK LIONS AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF KÜSNACHT BENEFIT ECONOMICALLY AS OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF KEK?

Advertising partnerships enable further investments. We are also investing in the future of hockey. What’s more, we have achieved an enormous increase in efficiency internally, as communication channels are easier to use and we can use resources more effectively. This is important because many people work in this field part-time out of enthusiasm for the sport, and these are the people who make such sporting events possible. It is essential that this can continue to be financed in the future. Future-oriented models are in demand. We are convinced that digital approaches are also part of the sporting business. This has already been demonstrated in other sports, such as football, where public viewings and live streams are already the norm. We also see opportunities for hockey here – especially in Switzerland, where this is a national sport.

“Over 300 AV manufacturers belong to the independent SDVoE Alliance* and work in a joint task force to ensure that the products are 100% compatible and work perfectly as a complete solution. For example, the NETGEAR switches are equipped with profile templates from AV standards and manufacturers, meaning you can easily configure the ports with a click. A switch can therefore be fully configured within minutes without any great technical knowledge,” explains Schäfer.