

PA-800 Series: Mid-Range Performance Workhorse

If the PA-400 Series is perfect for small offices, the PA-800 Series is where you start stepping into serious enterprise capabilities without going overboard into high-end pricing. It's designed for medium-sized businesses, regional headquarters, and branch offices with heavy traffic that need strong security and room to grow.

Model	Max Firewall Throughput	Threat Prevention Throughput	Max Sessions	Ideal Use Case
PA-820	~1.9 Gbps	~1 Gbps	~512,000	Medium offices with moderate application load
PA-850	~2.6 Gbps	~1.4 Gbps	~1,000,000	Regional HQs or large branch offices with heavy multi-user activity

Key Strengths:

- Full NGFW Capabilities – Application visibility, URL filtering, threat prevention, sandboxing, and VPN support.
- High Availability Support – Active/passive or active/active configurations for maximum uptime.
- Plenty of Interface Options – Multiple 1G RJ45, 1G SFP, and dedicated HA/MGT ports.
- Built for Growth – Handles more concurrent sessions and higher encrypted traffic volumes than entry-level models.

Real-World Deployment Example:

One of my clients, a healthcare group with five clinics connected via VPN, upgraded from aging hardware to PA-850s. The improvement in telehealth video call stability was immediate, and their IT team reported faster threat log analysis thanks to the device's stronger processing power. The HA pairing also meant zero downtime during software upgrades — a huge plus for 24/7 operations.

Pros:

- Great balance of performance and price for medium to large branch deployments
- Strong HA options for reliability
- Supports heavier encrypted traffic loads

Cons:

- Not enough throughput for large data center cores
- More expensive and power-hungry than PA-400 Series