

Swisscom corporate customers get choice of managed cloud or on-premises unified communications

Case Study



“We implemented managed services in close collaboration with Microsoft® and HP. This partnership between manufacturer and service provider gives customers peace of mind that their solutions are in expert hands.”

—Erich Gebhardt, head of product management, Corporate Business, Swisscom

HP customer case study
HP ProLiant Servers with HP Storage Area Network technology for on-premises and cloud deployments

Industry
Telecoms

Objective

Launch a managed service for hosted communications and collaboration for 'large' corporate customers

Approach

Responded to a request for a communications and collaboration platform for both on-premises and cloud-based managed services

IT improvements

- Reliable and highly-resilient unified communications and portal environments enhance collaboration
- Corporate customers easily and securely access latest versions of desktop solutions, enabling them to focus on their own business requirements

Business benefits

- Swisscom delivers unified communications and collaboration service for major customers in four weeks instead of four months
- Substantial increases in productivity at customer sites—in the proof-of-concept trial, one office solutions company saved 2,800 working hours in a year
- Each Swisscom customer receives a customised, secure system

With around 5.8 million mobile customers and 1.6 million broadband connections, Swisscom is the leading telecommunications provider in Switzerland. It also offers IT outsourcing services for business customers. Swisscom wanted to improve customer service by offering pay-as-you-go bundled voice and data services to its 6,000 corporate clients. Each client would have a choice of either an on-premises or cloud-based solution.

Michael Kerle, head of Go-to-Market, Corporate Business, Swisscom, says: “Integrated communications solutions are becoming increasingly complex for corporates to operate – plus, they consume significant capital and demand IT expertise. We saw this as an opportunity to attract new customers, and offer added value to our existing clients.”

Swisscom started by deploying the unified communications solution in-house, which helped to prepare the way for the new business initiative launched at the start of 2011. Externally, Swisscom wanted a solution that combined applications and a network with consulting, planning and operations—offered at a fixed-price per user, per month. In addition, Swisscom required an on-premises solution that could be dedicated for each customer with central management, while the cloud solution would be multi-tenant aware to reduce operating costs.



Swisscom wanted to ensure security by offering separate systems for each corporate customer either on-premises at their own data centres or through managed services in the cloud using the Swisscom data centre. Kerle says: "Our aim is to bolster the Swisscom brand by offering maximum flexibility and scalability to accommodate individual customer needs."

Around 60 per cent of Swisscom customers use HP data centre hardware

Swisscom turned to the Microsoft and HP Alliance, which specialises in providing end-to-end managed communications and collaboration solutions for enterprise customers. "To us, it was obvious that the combination of Microsoft and HP was the best way to launch this service. Around 60 per cent of our Switzerland-based corporate customers already use HP hardware in the data centre. The alliance between the two organisations encouraged us to work with HP and use Microsoft software for the on-premises implementations at customer sites," says Kerle.

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The new service for Swisscom corporate customers uses a powerful combination of Microsoft Lync 2010, Exchange Server 2010, and SharePoint Server 2010. The core infrastructure for unifying communications and delivering the portal consists of HP ProLiant blades running Windows® Server 2008 R2 and located in an HP BladeSystem enclosure. For the on-premises deployment, HP used the DL380 G7 server with the HP StorageWorks P4300 Storage Area Network (SAN) solution. The cloud alternative consisted of the

CloudSystem Matrix with BL460 G7 server, HP 3PAR storage, HP 5820 networking switches and routers, and an HP D2D backup solution.

HP SAN P4000 LeftHand/3PAR technology was used to protect the data while the Microsoft System Center suite of products was installed to help manage the infrastructure. Roman Hegnauer, Microsoft Data centre Sales specialist, HP Switzerland, says: "HP Insight Control for Microsoft System Center provides easy integration of the HP hardware manageability features into the Microsoft System Center consoles."

According to individual customer requirements, the service is either managed or run from the Swisscom data centre or on a dedicated environment in the customer's own data centre. Swisscom monitors both offerings with a multi-tenant solution using Windows Server 2008 R2 with Hyper-V technology, Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager 2007 R2 and Microsoft System Center Operations Manager 2007 R2.

To deploy the management infrastructure quickly and cost effectively, Swisscom decided to create a private cloud in its data centre, also using HP CloudSystem Matrix, with BL460 G7 server, HP 3PAR storage, HP 5820 networking switches and routers, and an HP D2D backup solution. This ensured that virtualised management services could be dynamically configured behind its secure firewall.

This was a completely new environment for Swisscom and its customers and success relied on critical 24x7 availability. From day one, Swisscom needed proactive rather than reactive support and this has been provided by an HP Proactive 24 support contract from HP Technical Services (TS).

This started with the installation and set-up of all the new servers, including Matrix, and integration with the old systems. A project lead was appointed to deliver technical consulting and HP now have fixed meetings with Swisscom to plan how more automation can be introduced to the whole environment and how the Matrix environment can be updated.

To deliver rapid response if problems occur, HP provides Swisscom with a technical account manager to whom they can turn with any problems. HP undertakes half-yearly reviews of the whole platform and also delivers ongoing assistance for upgrades and such tasks as setting up new firmware.

When a customer signs up for unified communications, Swisscom asks how many users are involved and where they're located, and obtains their Active Directory service credentials. Technicians configure the necessary number of Microsoft Exchange Server, SharePoint Server and Lync 2010 roles for the customer using Hyper-V to create virtual machines where possible.

HP gives customer peace of mind against unwanted downtime

Swisscom is offering customers a swiftly deployed, fully-managed service for unified communications and collaboration. The service is highly resilient and supported by HP server and storage technology. The fixed price per user per month removes any need for up-front investment in software or hardware.

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Roman Hegnauer, Microsoft Data centre
Sales specialist, HP Switzerland

HP needed just four weeks to deploy its managed services at a customer site, which for conventional on-premises infrastructure would previously have taken up to four months. Kerle says: “For companies, networking and communications are of key importance to their operations. The Swisscom managed service helps customers focus on their own businesses while we take care of managing their communications and collaboration infrastructures.”

Erich Gebhardt, head of Product Management, Corporate Business, Swisscom, adds: “We implemented the managed services in close collaboration with Microsoft and HP. This partnership between manufacturer and service provider gives customers peace of mind that their solutions are in expert hands.”

Audio and video conferencing helps promote environmental sustainability

Swisscom is fulfilling its commitment to lowering the company's carbon footprint with the unified communications solution, and will pass on the benefits to its customers. Kerle says: “The increasing use of audio and video conferencing is cutting the need to travel to meetings and helping promote environmental sustainability, as well as lowering costs.”

Swisscom offers secure connectivity with HP servers and storage technology for both Local Area Network and Wide Area Network, and connectivity to the internet and telephony. As well as providing advice, Swisscom is assuming responsibility for planning and operating the solution. Kerle says: “We will operate secure separate systems for each customer and provide maximum flexibility and scalability to accommodate individual needs.”

Customer solution at a glance

Primary applications

Unified communications – Microsoft Lync 2010, Microsoft Exchange Server 2010 and Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010

On-premises primary hardware

- HP ProLiant DL380 G7 server
- HP P4300 LeftHand storage system
- HP Networking solutions
- HP Insight Control

Cloud primary hardware

HP CloudSystem Matrix including:

- HP c-Class Blade System
- HP FlexFabric solution
- HP ProLiant BL460 G7 server
- HP 5820 networking switches
- HP 3PAR storage
- HP D2D backup solution
- HP DC04 SAN Directors

Primary software

- Microsoft Lync 2010
- Microsoft Exchange Server 2010
- Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010
- Windows Server 2008 R2
- Microsoft Hyper-V
- Microsoft Active Directory

HP Services

- HP Proactive 24 support

Swisscom invests in world-scale deployment to reduce overheads

The company learned valuable lessons from its own deployment before launching its managed services for unified communications and collaboration. With 20,000 internal users already connected to Lync 2010, Exchange Server 2010, and SharePoint Server 2010, Swisscom is reducing overheads and using the new system at all levels of the company. Kerle says: "In terms of size, Swisscom is a major customer for Lync 2010, with one of the largest deployments worldwide."

In promoting the new system internally, Swisscom made extensive use of specially trained ambassadors to promote knowledge of the offering among staff, which Kerle says had a major impact on adoption. Usage statistics about the internal deployment at Swisscom show rapid take-up. They include two million call minutes a month, 900,000 conference minutes a month covering 14,000 separate conferences—half using audio and video—and six million internal instant messages a month.

Office solutions company saves around 2,800 working hours a year

Switzerland-based firm Witzig The Office Company was an early adopter of the managed unified communications and collaboration solution from Swisscom, taking part in a proof-of-concept in 2010.

Bruno Anderegg, head of Operations and ICT at Witzig, says: "Due to presence management, desktop sharing and instant messaging, collaboration has become much easier. In addition, online meetings and document sharing greatly reduce the number of business trips required. We have saved an estimated 2,800 working hours in the first year and our business model will allow us to recover the costs within two years."

The substantial savings made by Witzig in the proof-of-concept have helped encourage other Swisscom corporate customers to sign up to the service. Swisscom has already attracted ten new clients since the launch date.



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