hp success story

HELVETIA PATRIA

The Helvetia Patria Group relies on HP Managed Services

The international Helvetia Patria Group relies on the services of HP Managed Services (previously known as Outsourcing Services) to guarantee the seamless utilization of their Europe-wide e-Business infrastructure by their local country organizations. Hewlett-Packard's outsourcing specialists are responsible for the operation of the entire infrastructure, and provide professional round-the-clock support to all the country organizations involved.

Helvetia Patria is an international all-branch insurance group, with subsidiaries, branches and business interests in central and southern Europe. Formed from the merger of Helvetia (a non-life insurer) and Patria Life Insurance, the St. Gallen-based group employs around 5000 staff and achieved gross premium income in 2001 of CHF 4.6 billion.
Within Switzerland, Helvetia Patria's 30 offices provide

comprehensive insurance and financial service support for private individuals and companies either alone or together with local partners including Helsana, Raiffeisen, Vontobel, and the cantonal banks.

The need for innovation

As part of a strategic situation overview of the Helvetia Patria Group held in 1999, there was a strong call for innovation. It emerged that the greatest potential for this was in the e-Business area, and the Group decided to establish a central e-Business infrastructure for the country organizations in Switzerland, Germany, Spain, Austria, Italy and France.

It was agreed that each company would take up a local version of the solution or develop country-specific solutions on the basis of the existing infrastructure. The key to achieving maximum utility would be through the central provision of the infrastructure and generic processes, as well as the centralized development of standard components.

A solution to free-up management and IT staff

The Helvetia Patria Group had had its entire IT infrastructure outplaced for some time. They decided to try to achieve the same with the new e-Business infrastructure: the e-Business solutions would be available centrally to the country organizations, and the infrastructure, i.e. platform and application, handed by an outsourcing partner. In addition to freeing-up management and the IT team, the Helvetia Patria Group was also looking to achieve several important goals:

- Seamless infrastructure operation
- Infrastructure stability and performance

- 24 x 7 support for the country organizations

Naturally, to achieve these aims, Helvetia Patria needed a respected outsourcing partner to work with, that would be capable of meeting their highly exacting requirements.

Creation of an eCenter in Zurich

In order to better coordinate these international activities, the Helvetia Patria Group planned to open a competence and coordination center – a so-called eCenter – in Zurich. The eCenter would be responsible for providing the country organizations with a standardized environment as the base infrastructure.

HP Managed Services is selected

At the beginning of 2001, the IT managers of the country organizations were presented with the proposed solution involving the eCenter. Based on this, the management of the Group decided to evaluate a technology partner for the entire solution (both software and hardware), as well as for the operation of the total environment. It was agreed that know-how for the solution, as well as the infrastructure, should be kept in one place. This was the only way to guarantee the necessary stability and performance. Accountability and responsibility were equally clearly defined, and Hewlett-Packard, as the total provider, made responsible for all questions.

After Hewlett-Packard and the HP-Nimius Platform had been selected as the solution provider, the Helvetia Patria Group decided to award the operation of the environment to HP Managed Services. From now on, the entire infrastructure would be operated and maintained from the HP Data Center in Basle.

Efficient progress thanks to professional project management

Based on HP's long experience of project management, implementation took place successfully on time (after just two and a half months), at the end of September 2001. The eCenter was made available for the development phase and the solution linked to the Internet. Not only did this approach provide Helvetia Patria with direct access to the Internet via the HP Data Center in Basle, it also allowed HP direct entry to Helvetia Patria's own internal network through the overall architecture solution. At the same time, a connection was set up to the Eurobackbone, the internal European network of the Helvetia Patria Group.

The end of the year saw the opening of the link to the Internet via the HP Managed Web Solutions infrastructure. This involved the services of HP Managed Services to ensure the highly complex and totally secure and reliable hosting of Internet and intranet applications within a closed environment. Within the Managed Services solution, the most important component is the

Web Transaction Server, HP's Virtual Vault System.
The Virtual Vault was developed on the basis of a particularly secure version of the HP-UX operating system, and ensures a highly secure connection between company applications and clients. Beyond this, the Managed Web Solution includes end-to-end networking of the web-based front-end system with the back-end system. HP Managed Services thus provides the round-the-clock technical and other resources necessary for a dynamic online presence. For the Helvetia Patria Group, it means they can now take full advantage of the additional value creation potential of a presence on the Internet.

Successful implementation of the project

Spain was the first country organization in a position to supply the know-how, time and manpower required. Thanks to intensive cooperation with the Swiss project and development team, Spain became the pilot country and went on line with the Life Offer project (OFEV) at the beginning of 2002. Dr. Christoph Niquille, head of the eCenter of the Helvetia Patria Group, is extremely satisfied with the project's progress: "We were very impressed by how quickly and professionally HP built the infrastructure and put it into operation. We get great value from HP." Didier Beck, Chief Technology Officer adds: "According to a meta study, when an application fails to work, it's 60% due to infrastructure problems – and up to now, we've had very good experience with HP."

Didier Beck is also satisfied with the outsourcing services: "We don't have to worry about anything, and can rely on every aspect running according to plan and without any delays or problems."

The IT specialists meet the challenges

The IT specialists faced several tough tasks:

- Individual companies, as well as the Group, place different demands on the new infrastructure. In order not to overwhelm the smaller countries, it was necessary to find a common denominator.

- A further challenge for the IT specialists was implementation: within just two and a half months, using a structured and efficient process combined with its professional project management expertise, HP had to build a highly complex environment, test it, and release it for development.

- In order to tackle the Internet connection, a special solution for Helvetia Patria had to be devised for the first phase. Helvetia Patria was connected to the HP Internet infra-structure Managed Web Solutions in the second phase

- An additional task was the connection to the Eurobackbone, i.e. to Helvetia Patria's internal European network. Together with Helvetia Patria, HP created a purpose-built network connection.

- Last but not least: Service Level Agreements (SLAs) had to be negotiated in a series of workshop for the infrastructure, network and Windows NT areas.

Hewlett-Packard delivered a comprehensive package

In order to accomplish the highly demanding development and operation of the eCenter and the total e-Business infrastructure, Hewlett-Packard was responsible for delivering the following products:

- 2 HP Servers (rp5400) Unix-Server (Data Bank Server) with MC-Service Guard Cluster

- 2 HP Servers (rp5400) Server (Virtual Vault Server) with MC-Service Guard Cluster

- 2 HP Servers (rp2400) Server (for the NT applications of Helvetia Patria)

- HP-Unix, HP Virtual Vault solution, HP-Nimius E-3; Oracle; BEA Weblogic

- HP Sure Store E DLT Library 2/20 (for the production environment)

- HP DLT 8000 Tape Drives (for the development environment)

A positive experience

The next stage of the project will be the incorporation of further country organizations so that the way is clear for completion of a successful, Europe-wide e-Business platform for the Helvetia Patria Group.

According to Dr. Christoph Niquille, the e-Business project of the Helvetia Patria Group has run very positively to date: "Up to now, everything has worked and the systems are running without any problems. The developers are happy and appreciate the reliability of the infrastructure. As a matter of fact, the infrastructure is a bit big for the needs of the individual countries, and we have to keep an eye on that. Above all, we have always been able to rely on HP, and continue to do so. Implementation was achieved on time and HP Managed Services continues to guarantee smooth operation."

hp success story

Client overview:

HELVETIA PATRIA

Branche: Insurance
Name: Helvetia Patria Insurance
Head Office: St. Gallen, Switzerland
Founded: 1858

URL: www.helvetiapatria.com

You can find further information about the advantages Hewlett-Packard can offer your company from your local HP representative or at:
http://www.hp.com

The technical data contained in this document may be changed without prior notice.

© Copyright Hewlett-Packard Company 2001.
All rights reserved. Reproduction, adaptation or translation without prior written permission is prohibited, except as allowed under the copyright laws.

hp invent