

HP converged network provides world-leading pharmaceutical company Nycomed with high performance and manageability at the best price

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Elmar Bistricky, head of Nycomed’s IT department in Dübendorf

The Customer

Nycomed is currently one of the world’s top 30 companies in the pharmaceutical sector, and operates in more than 100 countries. In the fiercely competitive market of products sold over-the-counter in pharmacies, in 2008 Nycomed was number 15. Today Nycomed manufactures drugs and medical-pharmaceutical products for many applications and therapies; its core competencies lie in the areas of osteoporosis, pulmonary medicine, gastroenterology, tissue management (healing of the body), and neonatology (the treatment of premature and sick newborns).

In 2006, backed by private equity, Nycomed took over the larger pharmaceutical manufacturer Altana Pharma AG and, in 2007, the company moved its headquarters in Switzerland. The Swiss subsidiary is now known as Nycomed Pharma AG.

The company has its headquarters in Zurich where 100 people work, and in Dübendorf, a few kilometers outside Zurich, about 100 more employees look after the marketing and sales of Nycomed products in Switzerland.

The Challenge

An international group like Nycomed Pharma AG must be confident that its communications are guaranteed around the clock. Moreover, global access to information must be possible, wherever and whenever necessary. For this reason, the pharmaceutical company wanted to move to Voice over IP telephony, a convenient telephone service which also provides cost and resource savings.

With the merger of the Swiss locations and organizations of Altana Pharma AG, Nycomed AG decided to locate all marketing and distribution structures for the Swiss market in Dübendorf. The old sites had a Cisco network. At the new location, a new homogeneous network was installed with HP* devices, which now link to the HP NBX V3000 VoIP Solution for IP telecommunications. The infrastructure handles VoIP, both locally and mobile, so powerful wireless LAN components were necessary.

In the pharmaceutical field, much sensitive data is exchanged over the network, raising concerns in the areas of R&D and production. Easily isolated virtual networks (VLANs) were therefore also on the request list, as was wide compatibility, since the existing IT solutions were mostly based on technology from Alcatel and Cisco. In addition, the new solution had to be uniform: data and voice transmission should be managed via the same software. Outlook also had to be integrated.

The existing solution before the enlargement to add Wi-Fi access was a flat Cisco network for data and a traditional PBX with separate cabling.

HP customer case study:

HP E5500 Switch

HP E4500 Switch

HP WX1200 Wireless LAN Switch

HP 2750 Wireless LAN Managed Access Point

HP NBX V3000 VoIP Solution with 100 phones

HP Network Director

Industry: pharmaceutical



The HP Solution

Elmar Bistricky, head of the 4-person IT department in Dübendorf, wanted a consistent upgrade for the Swiss headquarters of Nycomed Pharma AG. The entire network has been updated with WiFi and VoIP functionality. Two HP E5500 Switches with HP IRF (Intelligent Resilient Framework) Technology form a network backbone that moves data quickly and securely between Sales, Customer Service, Marketing and other departments. At the network edge, four HP E4500 Switches distribute data within the departments. For mobile access, an HP WX1200 Wireless LAN Switch controls HP 2750 Wireless LAN Managed Access Points, which—using different channels—cover the meeting rooms and the management of Nycomed Pharma AG.

The switches provide the necessary bandwidth to enable the telecommunications to always work. Three VLAN structures reside on the same hardware in Dübendorf. One is exclusively for the data of Nycomed departments, a second handles all VoIP telecommunications, and a third one is made available to customers with laptops who just want to log onto the Internet. Overlaps are not possible, and the functioning of the telephone service is guaranteed even for the largest data operation.

Nycomed Pharma AG chose networking and telecommunications service providers ComUp as implementation partner for the restructuring of the network. References, availability of specialists, the support model offered, and also the good relationship between the people involved were deciding factors.

Just twelve weeks elapsed between the decision to use ComUp and HP and productive usability of the new network—even though there were some hurdles to overcome. ComUp and HP were reliable partners for Nycomed: support was always fast and competent, and changes “on the fly” were considered and implemented. The most difficult challenge was, in retrospect, an error in the VoIP system which could occur only under certain conditions in certain configurations. Here, HP and ComUp proved that they were the right choice. Both companies did not rest until the error was found and, since then, the VoIP network has been stable and error-free.

The headquarters of Nycomed Pharma AG in Dübendorf now has a stable, low maintenance, high performance network. The unified communications solution provides VoIP, CTI and unified messaging and the employees find it much better than the previous phone system. Not only can they use their wireless laptops in the meeting rooms and elsewhere to access the corporate network or the telephone, but also a printer or any other device with an Ethernet interface.

In addition, Mr. Bistricky’s staff are delighted by the compatibility of the HP hardware with products from other vendors. HP devices are open standards-based so that they can be easily integrated with third-party products.

Overall, all Nycomed’s objectives were achieved: for a good price they now have a high-performance network which responds flexibly to required changes. Moreover, because all telecommunications are now on the same line as the data, they operate at the highest level of security through separate VLAN configurations.

Mr Bistricky says, “The choice of 3Com* for the renewal of the network and the VoIP facility has proved an absolute hit.”

Why HP?

One could almost call it tradition: for years Nycomed Pharma AG has used HP components in their network and telecommunications infrastructure. The HP components always demonstrate several positive points. For administrator and end user, they offer simple and clear operation, with a wealth of functions that can be exactly tailored to meet the needs of any operational area. In comparison to other manufacturers such as Alcatel or Cisco, Elmar Bistricky, Head of IT of Nycomed Pharma AG in Dübendorf, says HP Network Director offers centralised administration across all products in the network.

Moreover, this diversity of functions and the necessary performance was available at a very competitive price. Bids from renowned manufacturers such as Cisco, Alcatel and Panasonic required a higher investment amount.

Rudolf Weiss of implementation partner ComUp echoes the Nycomed IT chief in his views on HP: "3Com* is an absolutely reliable partner—as the troubleshooting impressively confirmed. Not every manufacturer supports the partner as quickly and easily to fix a rare error," he says. Mr. Bistricky agrees: "The fact that we could work closely with system engineers was a huge plus. Short decision-making processes meant we could respond very flexibly to changes."

Customer benefits at a glance

- Excellent price/performance ratio
- Compatibility of HP products with each other and with other vendors' products
- Expert, always accessible support
- High security through separation of networks
- Uniform network management

HP solution components

- HP E5500 Switch x 2
- HP E4500 Switch x 4
- HP WX1200 Wireless LAN Switch
- HP 2750 Wireless LAN Managed Access Point x 6
- HP NBX V3000 VoIP Solution (wireless/wired) with 100 phones
- HP Network Director

* The products referenced in this publication were developed and sold by 3Com, H3C, or TippingPoint, which were acquired by HP in April 2010. Many references to HP herein refer to 3Com, H3C, or TippingPoint or those products acquired from 3Com, H3C, or TippingPoint and not the HP product line generally.

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