



Wintershall

Overview

When Wintershall decided it was time to replace their aging communication systems, TOPCALL was able to provide them with just the right solution. The TOPCALL provided Wintershall with the means to bring their communication infrastructure into the 21st century, while offering a smooth transition from the old system to the new. The resulting solution offers a complete, integrated system for all forms of messaging.

Wintershall, a subsidiary of BASF in Ludwigshafen, is a German oil and gas company. The head office is situated in Kassel.

Challenge

Wintershall's head office has almost 30 different types of communications equipment, including telex machines. The company, a subsidiary of BASF in Ludwigshafen, uses a wide array of communication equipment to maintain its various international contacts. Internal and external communication is conducted via telex, fax and electronic mail, for example. Since these systems are essential for international communication, the new solution had to be able to receive and forward messages into all these different formats. Over time, Wintershall's electronic communication systems have been updated with new software. OfficeVision/MVS was followed by cc:Mail. SAP R/3 was introduced to communicate with sister company, 'Kali und Salz'. In addition to these modern electronic forms of communication, Wintershall continued to use older analogue communication systems, such as telex.

For example, in communicating with the Russian Gazprom, a joint venture with Wintershall under the name of WINGAS, the organisation relies almost exclusively on telex messages. Information on crude oil and gas is sent by telex to Wintershall, as Gazprom primarily works in regions where the communication infrastructure has not been upgraded. Therefore, more advanced forms of communication are frequently not an option. The Computer Services and System Support department was looking for a way to integrate the various platforms into an all-inclusive system.

Solution

The TOPCALL Communication Server, with links to a wide diversity of communication systems - fax, telex, X400, Internet mail, EDI and SMS - provided the exact solution Wintershall was seeking. In addition to integrating their old communication equipment, the Communication Server offered connections to applications, such as Lotus Notes, combining communications into a single system.



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Quote

"For users who send and receive many faxes, the TOPCALL server is an enormous improvement," says Klaus Böhle, the Computer Services and System Support Department at Wintershall. "With the fax server, we are able to interface internally more efficiently than with the normal fax."

Klaus Böhle summarises, "With the TOPCALL system, it's so easy to integrate unusual applications with the messaging system. The system is highly stable and automatically processes fax and telex messages. The link functions flawlessly. The integration went smoothly."

Result

Wintershall grew more familiar with the advantages of electronic messaging and used TOPCALL to provide invaluable communications know-how. When Wintershall decided to upgrade their Communication System, TOPCALL once again played an important role in building the new communications process. Wintershall contacted other suppliers, but none were able to integrate with their specialty software. TOPCALL set up a pilot project in only two days, including a fax server which could be used by the users.

The TOPCALL fax server at Wintershall automatically converts incoming telexes into fax or e-mail format and forwards them to the appropriate personnel. Another advantage of this system is message forwarding from one city to an office in another city. For example, if a telex connection at Emsland is temporarily out of operation, the head office in Kassel can forward the telex message to Emsland in another format (fax or e-mail).

The fax server even provides Wintershall with the means to monitor highly sensitive business processes. The department that monitors the gas pipe network for WINGAS is kept informed by the fax server. When there is a development that requires immediate attention, the fax server sends them information with all the necessary details, greatly reducing response time and efficiency.

Until recently, the Wintershall's head office handled the message transfer for its sister company, 'Kali und Salz', using SAP R/3 software. After the organisational link between both companies was dissolved, Kali und Salz retained its own TOPCALL system. Although Wintershall in Kassel no longer needs SAP R/3 to transfer of messages between its sister organisation, the company still wants to retain its SAP R/3 connections. In order to optimise and improve the exchange of information with other BASF subsidiaries, Wintershall plans to migrate to Lotus Notes as its main messaging platform.