

Aerospace



KLM

Quote

"You have to view TOPCALL as an investment in the future. Information, which arrives via telex, fax and Internet, can be streamlined. We're right in the middle of the process. New media are constantly being added, and TOPCALL can deal with that," says Joep Schild, system development manager.

The Supply Management department of KLM In-flight Catering Services (KCS) supplies the approx. 100 catering stations, which ensure that all aircraft passengers receive their snacks and drinks.

Challenge

Each consignment from the central warehouse in the Netherlands requires – at various points in the process – at least three faxes.

It seems such a simple matter for the stewardess to pass you the tray with a warm meal during a KLM flight from Singapore to Sydney, but it actually entails a great deal of preliminary work. The logistics for that little tray of warm food are organised at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam: the wine may have been bought in New Zealand, shipped via the central warehouse to the catering centre in Singapore and placed on the trolley by the caterer. The number of wine bottles is in line with the average consumption on the route in question and the customised system at Schiphol even knows that the porcelain plate has an average life of twenty flights.

Organisations like this are crying out for a universal centre, which can transparently deal with fax, telex, Internet, EDI and X.400, without losing any functionality.

Solution

The TOPCALL Communications server plays a vital role in this world wide logistical network. The intensive communications with the stations are usually by fax, via a TOPCALL Communications Server. This server is suitable for processing various types of message traffic: fax, telex, X.400 (EDI) and SMTP Mail (Internet). At KLM, the Communications Server is mainly used to send fax messages generated by the SAP R/3 logistics application and by Microsoft Mail. The TOPCALL's Communications Server and SAP came into service simultaneously at the moment that KLM In-flight Catering Services phased out its old mainframe system.

The link with SAP was an important consideration for in the decision for the TOPCALL Communications Server. This feature is well documented and uses standard software. TOPCALL is a good choice with regard to future aspects too, such as EDI. A third point is the integration with office automation.



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Overview

The introduction of electronic mail for KCS's office automation led to a speedier and more efficient exchange of information between the members of staff. As TOPCALL was also to be introduced for fax traffic generated from SAP R/3 in this period, KCS was able to kill two birds with one stone.

Result

Once a month the SAP logistics system at Schiphol generates a report for each station that lists which items in the warehouse should be counted. This count list is automatically sent by fax, via the TOPCALL Communications Server, to the relevant station. The stock at this location is then counted and the inventory information is sent back by fax to the central planning department, where the figures are compared to the norms based on past experience. The central warehouse subsequently prepares a stocking-up consignment; this too is accompanied by an automatically generated fax message. In this case it is the 'shipping advice', which is faxed as an extra check just before the consignment is dispatched. And finally the consignment is shipped by sea to the station in question.

All messages are routed via SAPComm to the TOPCALL Server, which then sends them one by one as faxes. Once a fax has been successfully delivered, a delivery notification is transmitted back to SAP, informing the user that his message has arrived correctly. The logos and forms of KCS are stored in TOPCALL as an 'overlay' so that all faxes can be sent according to the KCS corporate standard. In the long term, a form of EDI via the Internet will replace this form of automatic faxing. This makes no difference to TOPCALL, as the method of processing remains the same. The only important difference will be a significant reduction in costs per message.

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Future

In the future, KLM In-flight Catering Services is considering making more use of the Internet for communicating with the stations. The data will thus remain in digital form and can be processed directly. TOPCALL provides a total solution for fax, telex and SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) which has proved itself in practice.