

Major Hungarian water company cuts costs and boosts customer service by unifying communications and collaboration



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—Csaba Hornyák, IT manager, Transdanubian Regional Waterworks Corporation (DRV)

HP customer case study

DRV deploys an HP end-to-end Unified Communications and Collaboration solution with Microsoft Lync to lower costs and improve customer service

Industry
Utilities

Objective

Link the headquarters, a disaster recovery site and all branch offices with a unified networking and telecommunications solution to enhance communications and collaboration, increase customer service levels and reduce costs

Approach

Identify a networking solution that supports IP telephony and integrates fully with the chosen communications and collaboration tool

IT improvements

- Provides a reliable, high-performance networking infrastructure, increasing network availability and business continuity
- Offers Quality of Service (QoS), supporting enterprise applications across the business
- Provides a highly redundant network configuration, delivering a comprehensive disaster recovery capability
- Supports future contact centre activities, enhancing external customer services

Business benefits

- Delivers better IT services to end-users, improving customer satisfaction and loyalty
- Significantly reduces the operational cost of telecommunications and offers a payback period of two to three years
- Offers an end-to-end, unified IP telephony and communications and collaboration solution, boosting productivity
- Boasts high scalability, supporting growth for the foreseeable future

The Transdanubian Regional Waterworks Corporation or Dunántúli Regionális Vízmű (DRV) is one of Hungary's largest utility companies. Based at Siófok in the South Transdanubian region, it operates and maintains seven ground water facilities, over 400 wells, 34 sewage works and 771 pumping stations on behalf of the state and several local authorities. With a daily water production capacity of 426,000 cubic litres, DRV provides water to approximately 700,000 inhabitants and numerous industrial and agricultural plants in 343 settlements within this extensive region. It also supplies drainage services to 470,000 citizens in 170 communities.

Outdated network and ISDN dependency

The borders of Transdanubia are the River Danube to the north and east, the River Drava and River Mura to the south and the foothills of the Alps to the west. Covering an area of 38,000 square kilometres and forming almost half of the country's landmass, the region contains 10 counties and Lake Balaton, the largest freshwater lake in Central Europe. DRV provides drinking water to six of the region's counties and several partner companies which serve six of the region's main towns. The company's head office contains a data centre, the main business, human resources and technical departments while 47 branch offices deal with local operations across Transdanubia.

Customer solution at a glance

Application

Data centre operations
IP telephony
Communications and collaboration

Hardware

- HP 4110 IP phones
- HP 4120 IP phones
- HP Networking 5800 PoE switches
- HP Networking 3100EI PoE switches
- HP Networking MSR900 Series Multi Service Routers
- HP Networking MSR20-21 Multi Service Routers
- HP Networking MSR30-40 Multi Service Routers
- Microsoft Lync Server

Software

- HP Intelligent Management Center (IMC)
- Microsoft Exchange 2010
- Microsoft Lync 2010

HP Services

- HP Technical Services
- HP Education Care Packs
- HP Care Packs, 24/7 support

Over 10 years a heterogeneous network primarily employing Cisco switches and routing technologies had evolved to connect the headquarters with the branch offices. Over recent years, this outdated network had become progressively more unreliable leading to availability issues while network support and maintenance costs had escalated. A telephone system comprising analogue and Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) Basic Rate Interface (BRI) telephony also linked the sites. The company had leased the ISDN voice network from a telecommunications provider.

“Communications, collaboration and delivering IT services to the 1,200 end-users in our offices, treatment plants, engineering departments and testing laboratories had become increasingly difficult due to the age of our networking infrastructure,” explains Csaba Hornyák, IT manager, Transdanubian Regional Waterworks Corporation (DRV). “Both Local Area Network (LAN) and Wide Area Network (WAN) problems and general manageability issues frequently led to internal customer service setbacks. Our network simply didn’t offer enterprise performance, lacked Quality of Service (QoS) and wasn’t suitable for delivering services across our large field of operation.”

To enhance internal and external communications and collaboration, increase customer service levels and reduce costs, DRV sought a unified networking and telecommunications solution to link headquarter operations, a secondary disaster recovery site in Széplak and all branch offices. More cost-effective IP telephony would replace the existing telecommunications system.

“As our IT infrastructure already contained several Microsoft solutions including Microsoft Office, Exchange, SQL Server and SharePoint, we decided to implement the Microsoft Lync instant messaging, web and conferencing solution,” continues Hornyák. “That is when we heard about the HP/Microsoft Frontline Partnership and brought HP Networking into the solution qualification process.”

The most important networking criteria for DRV was a full integration capability with Microsoft Lync, high resilience and performance, sufficient capacity to support IP telephony and other applications, and scalability to support growth. DRV conducted a prequalification process with several networking and IP telephony specialists including Avaya, Cisco and HP. Delta Group, a local HP Gold Preferred Partner, represented the multinational business during the presales and subsequent phases of the project.

“The HP/Microsoft Unified Communications solution integrates well with our existing infrastructure, offers better performance than the Avaya or Cisco solutions and will deliver a sound return on investment (ROI). We estimate the payback time to be between two and three years. It was the best solution,” comments Hornyák.

End-to-end solution

Designed, tested and implemented by Delta Group, the HP Networking solution deployed across DRV’s head office and secondary site comprises four redundantly configured HP Networking 5800 core switches and 44 HP Networking 3100EI intelligent edge switches, which deliver 528 access ports to each site. The branch offices and other remote locations contain an additional 83 HP Networking 3100EI intelligent edge switches. The new infrastructure has a 10GB backbone and all switches deliver Power over Ethernet (PoE) to support IP telephony.

The Microsoft components of this end-to-end Unified Communications and Collaboration solution involve providing voice capabilities to Microsoft Lync and deploying Microsoft Exchange 2010. Microsoft Lync Voice combines traditional IP PBX voice user features and more flexible Unified Communications alternatives such as instant messaging. DRV users can therefore employ their computers or desktop IP phones as their main business communications device.

HP/Microsoft Frontline Partnership

The long-standing HP/Microsoft Frontline Partnership is dedicated to developing and delivering industry-standard IT to core businesses and strategic markets whilst providing customer satisfaction and value-for-money. Through the partnership, the two organisations combine their respective expertise as industry leaders to create fully-integrated IT solutions that deploy easily, offer high availability and include excellent on-demand support services.

“To minimise disruption and ensure business continuity, HP and its partner accommodated our day-to-day working requirements by installing the switches during out-of-office hours,” reveals Hornyák. “Deployment of the 52 HP Networking Multi Service Routers and communication gateways to support 560 HP IP phones is on-going but an initial pilot trial of the IP solution at our head office proved very successful.”

This HP solution with Microsoft Lync employs the HP FlexNetwork architecture to deliver a reliable, efficient and easily managed convergence-ready network. To help DRV personnel employ, maintain and understand the solution fully, it comes with HP Education Care Packs while HP Care Packs provide round-the-clock support.

DRV plans to use HP Intelligent Management Center (IMC) software to manage the enterprise network. “This application will provide a live overview of the entire network and perform nightly configuration backups for all switches,” says Hornyák. “We will immediately see any link or switch failures and quickly identify any abnormal switch conditions or excessively slow links. It therefore offers a comprehensive diagnostic capability, saving time and money.”

Lower costs and better customer service

Within the next few months, DRV will reap the benefits of a highly reliable networking solution that supports IP telephony and the Microsoft Lync Communications and Collaboration solution. Network performance, availability and scalability will support business activities for the foreseeable future while IP telephony will eliminate the costs associated with the earlier telecommunications environment.

“Our latest cost model indicates that our operational costs will dramatically decrease and we will achieve a return on investment within two to three years,” states Hornyák. “Moreover, we’re now in a position to support additional end-users as the business grows. As the number of regional sites increase, forecasts indicate that we will need to accommodate significant numbers of new customers annually.”

DRV is already experiencing enhanced efficiencies across the business due to improved internal communications and collaboration between staff. IT service delivery to the organisation’s end-users has improved significantly and it plans to use the solution to satisfy the demands of external customers.

“With a large dependency on internal communications, we initially focussed on in-house customer service but we will shortly extend the solution’s capabilities to an external customer service desk within our contact centre. We now have the flexibility to satisfy all customers’ needs and support business expansion,” concludes Hornyák.

For more information

To read more about HP Unified Communications with Microsoft Lync, go to hp.com/go/UCC



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