



Case Study: Ascom Switzerland AG

Virtual rendezvous for efficient collaboration

Ascom develops communication solutions for highly sensitive areas where security and traceability are essential. To connect its five locations in Switzerland, the company uses the Web conferencing service from Netviewer. This enables the company's centralized IT department to provide rapid support and ensure productivity. Employees in the finance department use the service to discuss data, balance budgets, and edit presentations across great distances.

Optimized communication

Ascom customers work primarily in areas where confidential, mission-critical communications are of extremely high importance. Examples include the police, hospitals, security systems, and the military. The specially designed platforms provide security and reliability, yet are flexible enough to adjust to each customer's requirements.

The company has five locations in Switzerland. For the centralized IT department in the town of Hombrechtikon, internal IT support is a major challenge because many problems are difficult to resolve over the telephone. In addition, controlling departments in each of the five locations must work closely together for budgeting and planning purposes.

„You can imagine how difficult it was to reconcile Excel sheets over the telephone. We wasted a lot of time simply making sure that everyone was talking about the same row and cell,” according to IT director Christoph Bächle. At the time, the only alternative was to travel between the locations, which resulted in unnecessary expenses and hassle.

Ascom is a solutions provider with comprehensive expertise in mission-critical communications. Its business segments are Wireless Solutions and Security Solutions. The company offers a variety of services ranging from analysis and consultation to system design and integration, project management, engineering, implementation, maintenance, and support. Ascom has subsidiaries in 17 countries and approximately 2100 employees. In 2006, the company achieved sales of 564.9 million Swiss francs.

High security, good usability

In order to improve both of these areas, Ascom searched for a Web conferencing service that would allow employees at several different locations to hold a virtual conference at any time and view the same monitor. „We wanted an excellent tool that would work straight through our network’s firewall without requiring endless approvals,“ according to Christoph Bächle. However, security concerns played a major role, particularly in the finance area, so the company found itself facing a number of other requirements. Fortunately, Netviewer fulfilled all criteria during the evaluation and is now used on a regular basis.

Areas where Ascom uses Netviewer:

- presentations to review financial data on a monthly basis
- budget planning across five locations
- editing of joint presentations
- straightforward integration of colleagues working from home offices
- rapid internal IT support, even with the inclusion of suppliers

„Of course, telephone calls eventually do the job,“ admits Christoph Bächle. „But a virtual Netviewer conference helps us avoid misunderstandings and accelerates overall communication, since the people involved can always see what other people are talking about. At the same time, we have greatly reduced expenses for traveling.“ Initiating a Web conference is incredibly easy. There is no need to install Netviewer. Instead, the user starts the program simply by double-clicking. A randomly generated number identifies the session so participants are connected within seconds and view the same screen.

Regular use in all departments

One look at the calendar reveals the general enthusiasm that Ascom employees have for the Web conferencing service. According to the IT director, the service is fully booked virtually all day. This is due in part to an increasing number of employees in other departments discovering the advantages of having a virtual rendezvous. Even the company’s managing director would like to have his own virtual conference room so he can work together more effectively with managers at international divisions and subsidiaries.

„An outstanding service! Netviewer helps us avoid misunderstandings and accelerate communication because everyone sees what the other person is talking about. We also greatly reduce our travel expenses.“

CHRISTOPH BÄCHLE
IT DIRECTOR

Quick overview of the benefits

- rapid IT support
- joint editing of presentations
- visually supported budget conferences
- the flexibility of planned or ad hoc sessions
- intuitive user interface
- certified multi-level security
- no installation or configuration
- no software requirements like ActiveX
- penetrates any firewall through the Internet port

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