

»» Scaling the Heights of Desktop Management



Solving support problems

A period of sustained growth in LEITNER's business has increased the number of company PCs to around 400. These PCs are distributed across 20 different sites, many of which are a day's journey away from the support team located at the company's headquarters. Until recently, engineers had to visit remote sites several times a year to solve problems that could not be fixed by telephone. "Including travel time, it quite often took one or two days just to solve one technical problem at another location," Elmar Lainá, a member of the support team, recalled. "That wasn't tenable in the long run."

It was also difficult to keep track of the company's heterogeneous PC environment which included several well known brands as well as various unbranded machines. The support team had started entering hardware-related data into Excel spreadsheets, but because of the time and distances involved they found it practically impossible to complete the process or keep the information up to date.

Further, the software installed on the company's PCs was equally diverse. In addition to a wide range of applications, many different versions of Microsoft* Windows* were being used, with each version requiring different service packs. As a result, telephone support was extremely complicated.

Value for money

Before selecting a desktop management system, Elmar Lainá and the other members of the support team compared two different solutions. They were looking for a complete range of features: remote management, automated inventory, operating system imaging and migration, software distribution, and software licence monitoring. "We found that the other package would have been twice as expensive as LANDesk Management Suite," said Alois Sparber, IT Manager. "The LANDesk Software solution not only offered all the functionality we needed, it also required less training than competitive products, so it was by far the most cost-effective option."

Other aspects of LANDesk Management Suite helped convince the LEITNER team of its merits. "It's important to us to have a wide range of supported languages," said Lainá. "Here in Sterzing, for example, we have both German- and Italian-speaking employees so

Business Needs

- More effective support for a distributed network
- Improved management of hardware and software inventories
- Smooth migration to Windows* XP

Solution

- LANDesk® Management Suite

Business Benefits

- More productive helpdesk due to reduced travel requirements
- Faster and more effective support for employees at remote locations
- The ability to support more users with the same number of staff
- Easier software and operating system upgrades due to automated inventory and imaging capabilities

“Because we have so many locations, it has been virtually impossible to keep track of the licences in use. LANDesk Management Suite will help us resolve this problem automatically.”

ALOIS SPARBER
IT MANAGER
LEITNER AG

PC client software needs to be available in both languages. That is the case with the LANDesk Software solution. The management tool can also be installed in English and German, which is very pleasing.”

By early 2003, LANDesk Management Suite had been implemented at all of LEITNER's European locations. Among the first features used were the automated inventory function and remote control for problem resolution. The remote control feature was a particular success, as Lainá explained: “From the very beginning we could, for example, configure a remote printer from the helpdesk without having to travel to another office. This has meant enormous time savings for us, with all the associated cost savings.”

Successful migration

The real test for LANDesk Management Suite came in the Spring of 2003 with the company's migration to Windows XP. In this context, the solution's flexibility and configurability became apparent. LANDesk Management Suite is able to store operating systems and applications in a single file and to write these “images” onto one or several workstations which are ready to run immediately afterwards. Administrators are given the option of using the integrated LANDesk Management Suite imaging feature or of incorporating an external imaging tool.

“When installing new hardware, we had increasingly been using an imaging tool to transfer preconfigured OS and application installations to client desktops. We wanted to continue using both the tool and our existing images. LANDesk Management Suite enabled us to do that,” said Lainá.

With the help of LANDesk Management Suite, the support team carried out a successful migration to Windows XP. They recorded full details of every PC's configuration in the inventory database, and used this information to prepare several suitable images. The upgrade process was then started from the clients at each location and these images were read from a server or a CD-ROM, depending on the available network speed. Elmar Lainá commented: “The upgrade was fully automated and took less than half an hour per machine. Without LANDesk Management Suite, this procedure would have been much more time consuming and laborious.”

The support team continues to make intensive use of the imaging feature. “At the moment we are providing employees with notebook computers,” explained Lainá. “The notebook images reside on our server. We can deploy software simultaneously to five or six notebooks over the network. Once the image has been written, the notebook is ready to run and is immediately registered in the inventory database.”

Another advantage of image creation and deployment is the ability to standardise software configurations throughout the company. Lainá continued: “Now, in general, our PCs all look the same and their exact configuration is documented in the database. This simplifies our helpdesk support enormously.”

Improved productivity

These workflow improvements have allowed LEITNER's four-person team to support growing numbers of locations and employees without hiring new staff. Alois Sparber said: "LANDesk Management Suite has saved us the cost of at least one additional support engineer."

The team at LEITNER now plans to take advantage of other LANDesk Management Suite features, such as software distribution and licence monitoring. Lainá explained: "Managing software licences is a particular problem for us at the moment. Because we have so many locations, it has been virtually impossible to keep track of the licences in use. LANDesk Management Suite will help us resolve this problem automatically."

Less than one year after its deployment, the LANDesk Software solution has become indispensable to LEITNER's support team. Elmar Lainá concluded: "It's hard to imagine what we would do without LANDesk Management Suite."

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