Ratisbona Temporary Employment Agency

Temp Agency In Bavaria Optimizes IT System With NetMan Desktop Manager From H+H

Centralized IT For Decentralized Organization

Virtually all of the top temp agencies have one thing in common: a wide network of branch offices. This applies to Ratisbona Zeitarbeit GmbH as well. Headquartered in Regensburg, Ratisbona has a regular staff of about 80 employees throughout 8 branch offices in Bavaria. External employees currently number about 1200. The organization also has two job centers, as well as an office in the Czech city of Plzeò. For 17 years now, Ratisbona has been connecting industrial, commercial and academic workers on a temporary basis with companies in their areas.

Information technology naturally plays a central role at temp agencies, where administrative, planning and invoicing tasks are handled electronically. The IT infrastructure at Ratisbona, however, failed to keep pace with the agency's rapid growth. A haphazard mix of Windows and Linux servers had evolved over the years, and a common data stock simply did not exist. Extensive data transfer operations had to be carried out every night to save records of the day's transactions on the servers at company headquarters. "We had certainly grown dissatisfied with the situation," recalls Markus Nathmann, IT administrator for Ratisbona. "For one thing, the data backup procedure was time-consuming. On top of that, the temp-agency software we were using was no longer meeting our needs," he added. So Ratisbona started looking around, both for temp-agency software and for the hardware they needed.

Centralized Solution Wins Contract

It was ProSoft, manufacturers of the new temp-agency software that Ratisbona chose, who put the agency in contact with the IT consultants at R.AU Computertechnik GmbH & Co. KG. ProSoft recommended R.AU on the basis of successful projects they had already completed working with temporary employment agencies. Markus Nathmann contacted R.AU Computertechnik and 14 days later, R.AU was awarded the contract. Decisive factors were the sophisticated centralized design and straightforward costing structure. The core of the new solution is terminal server technology, which is ideally suited to decentralized enterprise structures. ProSoft recommended a terminal server architecture based on Ratisbona's size and structure. With this method, all data processing executes on central servers and the employees' workstations are little more than input/output devices. Applications run on the terminal servers and data management is centralized, minimizing requirements on user terminal hardware. "An important point for us was that we didn't need to acquire any new workstation computers. We could continue using the existing machines. All I had to do was deinstall local applications," Nathmann declared happily.

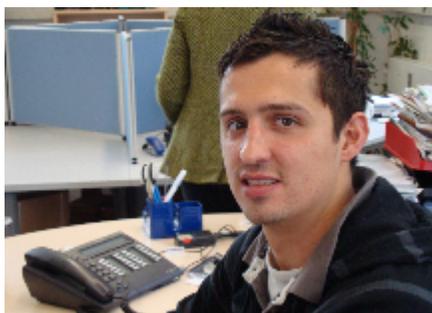### NDM Provides Convenience And Security

The introduction of a terminal server solution makes sense only if the costs are feasible. More importantly for Ratisbona, the administrative workload has to remain within a reasonable scope. "One of our chief requirements for the software solution was the ability to serve applications quickly and easily on the basis of user profiles," notes Markus Nathmann. "But we had to keep an eye on the costs at the same time," adds Gerhard Engel.

Since R.AU Computertechnik GmbH & Co. KG had been a partner of H+H Software GmbH for many years, it was no surprise that they suggested the NetMan Desktop Manager (NDM) terminal server-solution from H+H. NDM makes it easy to provide users with access to applications based on their membership in user profiles. Furthermore, NDM handles software license management and monitors usage reliably, to help ensure that enough licenses are available while effectively preventing costly over-licensing. "We have already implemented NDM successfully in a number of projects. And the cost is certainly not the least important factor in favor of this solution," says Gerhard Engel from R.AU. "Since our company has been in this business for a long time, we were able to select the best components for this solution without hesitation. And we applied the same expertise to our selection of NDM," explained Markus Nathmann. "We solicited other bids as well, but all the other offers were in a much higher price range, with no appreciable advantage to make them worth the expense." The volume of Ratisbona's project, including hardware, software and the services provided by R.AU, came to about 75,000 Euros, and it took the equivalent of just 20 person-days to get the new system installed and operational.

Implementation of the hardware in the data processing center as well as installation and configuration of NetMan Desktop Manager were handled entirely by R.AU Computertechnik GmbH & Co. KG, who also took care of installing and distributing applications. Mr. Nathmann did not require any training. "I learned the most important procedures by simply watching over Mr. Engel's shoulder," Nathmann states, describing his first experiences with NDM. "Besides, NDM operation is highly intuitive, and doesn't present any puzzling problems." The new solution has been running without a hitch since it was first put into operation. "I hardly ever have to do anything with NetMan Desktop Manager," Nathmann is pleased to report.

One of the biggest advantages is that the new solution enabled Ratisbona to improve security while optimizing their data processing. Sensitive customer data does not leave the processing center, and the complex procedures for data collation between the branch offices and the central office, which presented troubling security issues, are a thing of the past.

In future, Ratisbona will purchase more thin clients when new workstations are needed. These offer a large number of advantages, including compact dimensions, low operating noise, low power consumption and, not least of all, lower prices than full PCs. In

Markus Nathmann, IT-Administrator

the event of problems, thin clients are also miles ahead of "fat" computers, as they can easily be replaced without a major disruption of the user's work and no risk of data loss. "For a company like Ratisbona, the combination of terminal servers and thin clients is the ideal solution," as Gerhard Engel, technological manager at R.AU Computertechnik, sums up. "We will need to collect experience with our thin clients so we can learn how to prevent potential problems before they occur. So far, however, we have not had any difficulties," asserts Nathmann.

In the new Ratisbona solution, all of the servers are located at an external data processing center. A total of 7 new servers have been implemented, including a domain controller, an exchange server, a load balancer and 4 terminal servers. The branch offices of the agency are connected to the data processing center over secure Internet connections, and the Ratisbona central office is connected to the data processing center over a dedicated line for administration of the servers. Currently, employees access centralized applications and user data from some 70 computer workstations.

No Learning Curve For Employees

Introducing a new IT solution usually involves some amount of training for the employees who use it. With NetMan Desktop Manager, however, this is not the case. Users see only their accustomed Windows interface, with links to their applications in the Start menu and on the desktop, just as before. Thanks to NetMan's seamless integration, users see almost nothing of the NetMan interface they might notice just the small icon in the notification area of the taskbar that provides information on NDM activity. No adjustment period means no loss of productivity. "For the most part, our staff haven't even noticed that the applications run on terminal servers in the data processing center now, rather than on their local computers." Overall, Markus Nathmann rates the NDM system very highly.

About Ratisbona Temporary Employment Agency GmbH

Ratisbona is a temporary employment agency based in Bavaria that provides services primarily to the industrial, commercial and academic sectors. In addition to their headquarters in Regensburg, Ratisbona currently operates 8 branch offices and 2 job centers in Bavaria, as well as an office in the Czech city of Plzeò. A total of some 80 staff members seek the best possible temporary employees for the companies that use Ratisbona's services.

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About R.AU Computertechnik GmbH & Co. KG In Schwandorf

Based in the city of Schwandorf in Bavaria, R.AU Computertechnik GmbH & Co. KG has been a successful full-service systems integrator for 20 years now. With 18 employees, R.AU serves primarily medium-sized companies located within the region from a broad range of business sectors. The services they offer range from consultation and implementation to service under warranty and application development. R.AU Computertechnik GmbH & Co. KG work extensively with products from Microsoft Inc. and associated companies, and have made a name for themselves in the area of server-based computing.

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About H+H Software GmbH

H+H Software GmbH, founded in 1989, is a systems and software manufacturer located in Göttingen, Germany. The company's core business includes consulting and the development and marketing of application, license and network management solutions. H+H Software's clientele is mainly composed of large and medium-sized companies, universities, government agencies, libraries and schools. But H+H also serves individual users with the stand-alone version of its popular CD and DVD emulator, Virtual CD. The company's products include NetMan, NetMan Desktop Manager, Virtual CD and HAN (Hidden Automatic Navigator) and ProGuard. H+H also offers an optimized NetMan version for educational use, NetMan for Schools and H+H Schoolbox.

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