Case Study: Lidl International

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Europe:
Infosim GmbH & Co. KG
Friedrich-Bergius-Ring 15
97076 Wuerzburg, Germany
Tel: +49 931 20592 200
E-Mail: info@infosim.net
WWW: http://www.infosim.net

Americas:
Infosim North America
Suite 125
13785 Research Blvd, Hwy 183
Austin, TX 78750, USA
Tel: +1 512 410 6848
E-Mail: info@infosim.net
WWW: http://www.infosim.net

Asia-Pacific:
#04-103C German Centre
25 International Business Park
Singapore 609916
Tel: +65 6562 8286
E-Mail: info@asia.infosim.net
WWW: http://www.infosim.net

Background

Lidl International is a multinational discount supermarket chain headquartered in Germany. It is currently the largest within Europe with an annual global revenue of over €59 billion. Lidl has over 9,000 retail outlets, warehouses and offices based within 22 countries which employ over 150,000 staff worldwide.

It is comprised of many sub-divisions, with over 35 within Germany itself, and an infrastructure based on a regional hub and spoke design. Approximately 10 to 20 IT Systems are centralised within these regional retail outlet hubs providing services to the spoke retail outlets.

IT Systems are reconfigured monthly based on business metrics and other impact factors to provide the best service for the coming month. All point-of-sale devices (Chip and Pin, EPOS etc) and the cash registers themselves are IP enabled allowing for immediate stock management, ordering and financial reconciliation.

Customer Requirements

Due to the nature and business criticality of the network within Lidl, criteria for a solution was formulated to provide complete service assurance and fulfilment capabilities across all infrastructure components.

The elements within the estate to be monitored include all network devices, point-of-sales devices, servers, databases and environmental systems across each of the following processes:

Device Discovery. Systematically discover new elements, sites and services added to the existing infrastructure.
Device Measurement Discovery. Routinely scan elements for new measurement capabilities; for example, new interfaces, QOS queues, services etc.
Fault Management. Monitor all elements for fault conditions through passive and active monitoring. Analyse any fault conditions and calculate the root-cause.
Performance Management. Define measurements and KPI thresholds for performance monitoring.
Service Management. Monitor all infrastructure elements within the business and sales process structures to identify business impact.
Change Management. Use an automated repeatable change management process for monthly network reconfiguration.
Reporting and Dashboards. Deliver reports and live dashboards of network and business process service status.
User Interface. Have a single integrated user interface.

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The StableNet® Solution

Infosim's StableNet® was the only proposal that was able to meet and exceed each of the requirements as defined by Lidl. The simple deployment procedures across such a large network coupled with the simple implementation and adaptation effort required was key to meeting the short deployment timescales. In total, the global deployment took just **6 weeks** comprising about **30 man-days** of employee time.

Fault and Performance Monitoring

StableNet® monitors the entire global Lidl infrastructure including all network devices, servers and key application processes as well as over **10,000** individual telecommunications circuits. This means that the time to repair faults has been shortened dramatically guaranteeing Lidl a high availability of revenue generating business processes.

Systematic faults across different locations have been quickly identified and solutions put in place to mitigate them. Trend analysis allows for proactive planning before problems arise whether that is with a telecommunications circuit, switch, air conditioning unit or a single battery within a UPS.

Monitoring of store and business processes

StableNet® was also tasked to manage the configuration and financial databases on each of the **50,000** cash registers. A dedicated StableNet® Client Agent was deployed to each cash register to manage the configuration. To maximise availability and reduce infrastructure failure impact, it was decided to deploy StableNet® agents within each of the **9,000** retail outlets. The flexible nature of StableNet® means **it is the only product** that is able to be deployed in such a large scale fashion.

Before StableNet® was deployed, a branch manager had to manual check each cash register to ensure the new pricing lists had been transferred and accepted successfully. This manual process was not always executed correctly and human-errors occurred. Incorrect pricing leads to refunds which delays the whole customer experience. StableNet® has sole responsibility of ensuring the correct automated deployment of product price updates and automatically notifies Lidl Headquarters of any discrepancies.

Critical processes must occur each night, such as transferring that day's retail sales information to the local warehouse for stocking. StableNet® is able to monitor that process and proactively alert in the event of failures in communication or back-end processes thus ensuring that stock levels are maintained in the retail outlets.

During the project, new requirements were added and Infosim's StableNet® was able to deliver within a short turn-around time. One such example was the request to interface with and monitor a large scale SAP business operations software installation. This enabled StableNet® to be **seamlessly integrated** into existing business processes and workflows reducing the need to retrain existing staff.

Configuration Change Management

As the network and infrastructure configurations change dynamically in line with regional office and retail outlet business assignments, StableNet® is used to deliver the configuration changes in a **fast, error free, repeatable and automated process** which has dramatically reduced human related errors and vastly increased infrastructure availability.