

New Service Optimizes Network Quality, Boosts Business

Versatel AG wins new contracts with Cisco Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

By purchasing Cisco Smart Net Total Care and adding Cisco Network Optimization Service as a complementary service, Versatel was able to both quickly mesh its consolidated multiple networks and increase its performance.

CUSTOMER NAME:

Versatel AG

INDUSTRY:

Telecom

LOCATION:

Berlin, Germany

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:

1300

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Bring consistency to nationwide fiber-optic network
- Achieve world-class availability and case management
- Provide network stability and reliability

NETWORK SOLUTION

- Cisco Smart Net Total Care with network optimization services enables Versatel to take an inventory of the entire network in three days
- Cisco Services' deep knowledge of Versatel network leads to swift, easy problem resolution
- Network inventory and optimization improve quality of service and customer satisfaction

BUSINESS RESULTS

- Exceeded goals for strategically important IP VPN services for business customers
- Reduced number of software and hardware versions on network
- Cut number of problem tickets, accelerated problem resolution, reduced network downtime and operational costs

Business Challenge

With headquarters in Duesseldorf and offices in 12 of 16 states, Versatel AG provides voice, Internet, and data services to residential, business, and carrier customers throughout Germany. Key to this effort is the company's fiber-optic network, which stretches for more than 30,000 kilometers (19,000 miles) and serves as the delivery mechanism for Versatel's solutions and services.

To achieve this nationwide coverage, Versatel consolidated numerous regional and city network carriers, all of which had offered services on their own platforms. Although Versatel uses Cisco® components in its network, as did many of the local carriers, there were many versions and legacy configurations, which became a challenge when it came time to unite the more than 20 carriers under Versatel administration.

The company's ability to provide top-quality network service with no downtime is a key component of its success. Yet the interplay between disparate hardware and software versions and configurations was making this difficult. Versatel needed to gain control of its network assets and improve the quality of service.

"Versatel is known for its high-density fiber network," says Dr. Hai Cheng, chief commercial officer for the company. "For those applications with strong

bandwidth demand and a high SLA, customers select Versatel as their network supplier. A reliable network operation is key for success."

Network Solution

To address quality-of-service issues, provide superior coverage, and better manage its many network assets, Versatel turned to a known quantity: Cisco Services. Having entered into its first direct maintenance and service contract with Cisco in 2006, the company was familiar with the good support that Cisco Services provides. And Cisco, in turn, was familiar with the problems that Versatel was facing. So when Cisco presented its Smart Net Total Care and Network Optimization Service (a Cisco Services solution comprising a range of proactive planning, design, implementation, optimization, and support services) the business impact was obvious and Versatel was ready to move forward.

“When Cisco explained their Smart Net Total Care and Network Optimization Service, we realized they could improve the quality of our network to proactively avoid trouble tickets,” says Dirk Brameier, head of business unit network operations for Versatel.

For Brameier’s team, the first step was gaining insight into the various local networks, by running a network inventory using Cisco Smart Net Total Care to determine what software was running on which devices, with what kind of backbone configuration. Smart Net Total Care achieved this with no downtime and without requiring Versatel to give up control of sensitive data. Within three days, the “inventory collection process” was complete and the current state of the network was determined. Versatel understood exactly what equipment was in the network and could manage it efficiently. Accurate and comprehensive information meant that network quality of service began to improve almost immediately. The network has become more reliable, risk is reduced, and it is easier to plan and budget for end-of-life or end-of-service.

“By analyzing, developing, and implementing measures based on the results of that discovery, we were able to begin fine-tuning our network,” says Brameier. “Now we can ensure that service calls are acted on immediately. We no longer have to spend time locating devices.”

“Working with Cisco, we’re able to deliver high-quality IP VPN service to our customers.”

— Dr. Hai Cheng, chief commercial officer, Versatel AG

Business Results

Versatel also quickly discovered that Cisco Services’ promise to reduce trouble tickets was more than just talk. Thanks to the inventory collection processes facilitated by Smart Net Total Care and the Network Optimization Service, Versatel was able to reduce the number of software versions in the network. The result: far fewer tickets. “For our customers, the change is obvious,” says Brameier. “Fewer problems in the network mean fewer tickets for customers. And when problems do arise, they’re much easier to resolve.”

A year and a half into the contract, the cooperation between Cisco Services and Versatel staff has only intensified. “During the time we’ve been using Smart Net Total Care and the Network Optimization Service, the Cisco network consulting engineer has gained deep insight into our network, the way our staff thinks, and our product lines,” says Brameier.

Versatel has done more than just increase network service quality and customer satisfaction. The company has also used the knowledge gained through Smart Net Total Care and Network Optimization Services to win new contracts and customers. Case in point: When an existing customer asked Versatel to bid on the project of redesigning and configuring its infrastructure to fit

within Versatel's own Cisco-based network, Versatel was able to secure the job with ease, leveraging the knowledge that Smart Net Total Care and the Network Optimization Service had already delivered. Says Brameier, "Without the deep insight into our network structure that our close cooperation with Cisco Services provided, we would not have been able to perform this task as easily."

For Versatel's chief commercial officer Cheng, the bottom line is clear: "Working with Cisco, we're able to deliver high-quality IP VPN service to our customers."

Next Steps

Brameier knows that a finely-tuned network is a successful network. For this reason, he foresees a successful relationship with Cisco Services. "I'm convinced that using Cisco Smart Net Total Care and the Network Optimization Service has had a noticeable impact on our customers and on our business," says Brameier. "With technology constantly changing and networks continually evolving, Versatel will always be able to benefit from the in-depth knowledge of specially trained Cisco engineers who are also intimately familiar with our network and business objectives."

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Smart Net Total Care, go to: www.cisco.com/go/total.

For more information about Cisco Network Optimization Service, go to www.cisco.com/go/optimize.



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