



# Case study

## Reduce to the Max

The logistics company Lamprecht integrates its desktop environment with IGEL Technology smart clients and subsequently cuts its total IT costs in half.

Business Solutions von  
IGEL Technology





# Reduce to the Max

When Lamprecht Transport AG converted to server-based computing five years, it was one of the first transportation companies in Switzerland to consistently do so, and IT executives did not yet know the fundamental course that this would entail. "Except for the prognosis of consulting firms and manufacturers, there were no clues as to what extent the final savings potential was," recalls Reto Spörri, IT director at Lamprecht. "Although there were no experience values, we nevertheless dared to take the step into the new technology."

## First experience with server-based computing

The fundamental idea of a central computing environment was familiar to the family company, founded in 1945 and independent to this day, a long time ago. Until the time of the conversion, about one-half of the 300 employees in the Basel headquarters and in the six Swiss branch offices accessed the industry-specific application SISA via AS/400 terminals. Until today, these form the core applications of the logistics company and were customized for the migration to the terminal servers. The other half of the work spaces were equipped with PCs that, in contrast to the so-called "dumb terminals," also provided other applications such as Microsoft Office as well as Internet access. The PCs were connected to each other over local Windows NT 4.0 networks, and new data was centrally synchronized at hourly intervals. "In 2000 we already recognized that service costs for the high maintenance PC environment was increasingly burdening our IT budget," said Spörri. "At that time company executives decided to consolidate the server landscape through the introduction of a server-based computer architecture that today runs under Windows 2000 and Citrix MetaFrame XP." The approximately 120 existing PCs were initially cost-effectively operated as Citrix DOS clients. Furthermore, by making their drives remote, these provide less of a target for unauthorized installations or viruses.

## Integrated desktop environment

The long-term goal of the migration, according to Spörri, was a fundamental integration of the working environment. A location-spanning thin client infrastructure should consistently provide office applications together with AS/400 access expanded on the desktop level over a uniform user interface to the central administration of the server. "This migration step required a longer evaluation since precisely in the beginning phase of the thin client trend the equipment was not always technically mature or not attractive enough in terms of price. Consequently we had to compare the acquisition costs back then of a thin client plus a Citrix license with those of the PCs," explained Spörri. With the Citrix launch in spring, 2001, Lamprecht gathered initial experience with generic thin clients. 2002 saw the first test setting with equipment from the manufacturer IGEL, Neoware, and Wyse, which added additional test settings with IGEL Smart Series thin clients in 2004. After the successful conclusion of this test phase, Lamprecht installed a total of 130 thin clients of the type IGEL-132 LX Smart in order to finally replace all remaining DOS clients and first generation thin clients according to a four-year life cycle. "We want to convert the remaining workplaces to IGEL by the end of 2005," said the IT director.

## Low investment and service costs

In addition to favorable price, Spörri especially pays attention to a user-friendly administration. "Our IT environment poses only very minimal technical requirements on the thin clients. We have no special peripheral equipment, and all printers are network printers. That is why the most important decision criteria consists of the optimal combination of cost and management. With the cost-effective IGEL smart clients, we have found the ideal solution." Spörri especially emphasizes the administration software of the German manufacturer: "The graphical user interface of IGEL Remote Management Suite is tightly based on the trusted Windows environment and is nearly self-explanatory. In comparison with the competition, the logically constructed software tool is the best guard against possible faulty operation. The functional spectrum and performance capabilities of the software convinced us. All new thin client sites could be configured centrally in the front end. The branch office employees themselves could even undertake the receiving inspection and connection of the equipment." Within 2 weeks, the workplaces were tested and pre-configuration including the creation of all profiles was



completed. The total expense for the branch office conversions was generously estimated to be 20 man-days by Spörri. With the continuous central administration of the thin client environment, Spörri already achieves an enormous decrease in support costs. "While our PC workplaces cost 7200 Swiss francs total, according our own determination, a new thin client workstation costs only about 3000 Swiss francs including investment. Altogether our total cost of ownership is reduced by about 50 percent. Today we administer all 250 decentralized workstations with four IT employees and in the meantime can concentrate on our core competencies again."

#### **High availability with continuous operation**

Time-intensive and expensive service trips by the IT department as found during the times of PCs are now a thing of the past. In every branch office there are one to two spare TCs that the employees can exchange for the end unit on site in the event of a defect. After booting up, the workplace is immediately available again. The defective unit is sent to claim settlement at the main office. In place of the local client-server network, the branch offices today only have a switch as well as an ADSL modem for the VPN connection. Both units likewise allow themselves to be exchanged on site quickly and easily. "We have trained power users for software and hardware in every branch office who can execute simple IT jobs," says Spörri. With the exception of the IT department, where administrative assignments require an additional four PCs, all employees work with a thin client today. "For former users of AS/400 terminals, the consolidation of PC and terminal is a vast improvement. They finally have access to office applications including email and Internet which significantly promotes acceptance among employees. Through the abolishment of PCs, we can seal additional security leaks. My personal project motto is 'Reduce to the Max.' With the new IT environment, we have built strong guard rails in order to enhance productivity on one hand, and on the other hand, we offer our users all necessary resources in order to be able to work smoothly as well as additional freedoms such as, for example, temporally unrestricted Internet access."

#### **Company courage pays off**

By the end of the year, Spörri would like to equip the remaining 80 to 100 IT workplaces with IGEL smart clients and with that complete the migration project. For the following year, he has undertaken a renewal of the server hardware with which he would like to revert to with the computer retailer Delec, which was already participating in the thin client rollout. "The company courage that accounted for the success of Lamprecht Transport AG since the post-World War II era, has in retrospect proven itself even in the early decision for a basic course of IT strategy," summed up Spörri. "Together with IGEL and its partner Delec, we are successfully planning the fundamental idea of server-based computing to its completion. Our modern IT environment delivers to us a future-proof base on which we can further build our international market position."

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