



Leading Worldwide Optical Supplier Improves Collaboration With SharePoint and Exchange

Overview

Country or Region: Worldwide,
Headquartered in Germany
Industry: Health and Personal Care

Customer Profile

Headquartered in Aalen, Germany, Carl Zeiss Vision is a global manufacturer and supplier of optical products. It was created in 2005 as the result of a merger between the optical business unit of Carl Zeiss AG and US lens supplier SOLA.

Business Situation

The merger threw together two different IT system landscapes, immediately causing compatibility problems between users on the Microsoft and IBM/Lotus Notes platforms.

Solution

Carl Zeiss Vision assessed its IT needs and determined it could save on migration costs by moving to Microsoft® Exchange and SharePoint.

Benefits

- Productivity and Collaboration Gains
- Future-Ready Environment
- Improved Usability

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Tobias Riegg, Team Manager for Small Business Solutions, Carl Zeiss Vision

Carl Zeiss Vision was formed from the merger of optical business of Carl Zeiss and American lens supplier SOLA. Carl Zeiss was on the Lotus Notes platform while SOLA was on the Microsoft platform, causing integration problems. The new and bigger Carl Zeiss Vision conducted an IT study and decided that it would save on migration costs by moving all Lotus Notes users and the former Domino applications to the Microsoft solution, deploying Microsoft® Exchange Server and Microsoft Office SharePoint Server across the 3,300-strong company.



“With SharePoint, it’s so easy and more convenient to handle projects and work with teams. The migration effort from Lotus Notes to the Microsoft platform was less than we anticipated.”

Tobias Riegg, Team Manager for Small Business Solutions, Carl Zeiss Vision

Situation

Collaboration Woes

At the time of the merger, all 800 PC users at the business unit of Carl Zeiss were on Lotus Notes. On the other hand, all 2,500 users at SOLA were on Exchange.

“From a pure ‘number of messaging users’ point of view, it seemed quite obvious to migrate from Lotus Notes to Outlook/Exchange,” said Tobias Riegg, then Corporate IT Project Manager, and now Team Manager for Small Business Solutions at Carl Zeiss Vision. “But we also had around 60 Lotus Notes/Domino applications in place in the former Carl Zeiss unit and therefore, we wanted to make a thorough analysis together with a neutral counterpart in order to evaluate what will be the ideal solution for Carl Zeiss Vision in the long run.”

The newly-merged company compared functionality and implementation costs in the areas of collaboration and messaging of both Microsoft and IBM solutions, and determined that the best decision was to move the entire organization to the Microsoft solution.

The main driver was migration costs. Standardizing on the Microsoft platform would cost an estimated €138,800 (US\$205,600), while moving to Lotus Notes, €236,600 (US\$350,500).

“Besides migration costs, we wanted all users to experience a common look and feel and that was why we chose Microsoft,” said Riegg.

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In addition, the company calculated that they could save license costs for Lotus Notes by extending the existing Microsoft Enterprise Agreement to all users.

Complex Applications

In order to save on IBM Lotus Notes licenses, Carl Zeiss Vision also needed a replacement for the 60 or so Lotus Notes applications ranging from document databases to more complex team workflow processes that needed to be migrated.

On picking Microsoft, Riegg said, “We looked at the big players in the market. We knew we had the solution here. There was no use reinventing the wheel, it was not necessary.”

Solution

Carl Zeiss Vision’s migration was two-part: First, to replace the messaging platform; and second, the collaboration tools. The company reviewed all its applications and databases and decided to move all Lotus Notes applications to the Microsoft platform.

Business owners were consulted, and the company sought to identify what was obsolete, and what needed archiving.

For its applications migration, there were three main scenarios, explained Riegg.

The first included databases of documents that needed to be saved in a structured manner, requiring simple “copy and pasting.” The second consisted of documents with metadata, which was also “not a big deal” to migrate to SharePoint document libraries, said Riegg.

Most of the 60 Lotus Notes applications were rebuilt in SharePoint with basic “Out of the Box” SharePoint technology, even many of those that were initially considered

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SERVICEPORTALS

complex to rebuild in SharePoint. In several cases, not only the application logic, but also the content of the Notes applications had to be moved over. In these cases, the Lotus Notes documents were either copied manually into SharePoint or by using the Quest Notes Migrator for SharePoint.

The third and more complex part of the application migration included four workflow applications which were more challenging to move, said Riegg.

That’s when the company approached Microsoft Gold Certified Partner SERVICEPORTALS, said Harald Witte, its CEO, for their expertise in SharePoint customization.

“A lot of functions typically found in a Notes environment can be built out of SharePoint functionality that is delivered with the product out of the box,” Witte said, agreeing with Riegg.

The four remaining and most complex Notes applications included an application which tracks requests for transporting parts throughout the factory; a facility management application in which employees request office supplies; and two IT processes that help employees deploy new applications and add new user accounts to various IT systems.

Witte said SERVICEPORTAL’s piece of the migration was two-phased. The first phase was to develop and implement the applications, which took less than 20 person days total within a period of three months. In the second phase, the applications were tested and put online in the production system in the HP data center. Most time-consuming in this phase was the set-up of an appropriate rights-management system for the different roles used within the applications.

All of the workflow functionality could be implemented by using SharePoint lists, so that all workflows are completely accessible within a web browser. In contrast to the former Notes applications, no fat client application is needed anymore, which is also a huge benefit for the IT in terms of deployment.

He added that besides using standard SharePoint web parts and workflows, his company prepared sets of custom web parts to enhance the SharePoint lists. In this way, the functionality of the former Notes applications was fully rebuilt while the user interface significantly improved.

“The effort for the application migration was less than we anticipated,” added Riegg, who was surprised by the ease and speed of customization and development in SharePoint.

Benefits

Productivity and Collaboration Gains

“The workflows were much better once the majority of users migrated,” said Riegg. “It was the right solution in the end because of user acceptance. We work more smoothly in SharePoint than in Lotus Notes. The integration with Outlook and the Office package is great; we can jump directly from one to the other.”

The combination of Exchange and SharePoint environments has improved Carl Zeiss Vision’s interconnectivity.

“We are a global organization with 60 different sites all over the world,” said Riegg. “It is quite nice to have a common solution so that when people are travelling, we can look into each other’s calendars.”

“The strength of SharePoint is in its collaborative space,” said Riegg.

For More Information

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For more information about SERVICEPORTALS products and services, call +49-721-570-4447-0 or visit the Web site at: <http://www.serviceportals.de>

For more information about Carl Zeiss Vision products and services, call +49-7361-5578-0 or visit the Web site at: <http://vision.zeiss.com>

Having that common collaborative platform has been a boon for Carl Zeiss Vision's virtual teams, especially the corporate functions that need to work and manage projects across borders.

He added: "We have lots of teams that do cross-border collaboration in operations, R&D, IT, you name it. And therefore it is very good to have a common collaboration platform with a high degree of self services for the users. Everyone can store and access common information easily from everywhere."

The single sign-in has also proved a hit with employees.

"We really appreciate that because we had nothing comparable in the past," said Riegg. "The Lotus Notes users had multiple user names and passwords, but now we have a single sign-in for both messaging and applications, with Windows Active Directory. With SharePoint, it's so easy and more convenient to handle projects and work with teams in all departments. Everybody really likes it."

Future-Ready Environment

Carl Zeiss Vision is looking ahead to build on its SharePoint platform and to extend it for external access.

SERVICEPORTALS' Witte said that Carl Zeiss Vision was taking advantage of the platform at a "full scale."

He said: "After this, we are developing some additional SharePoint applications for Carl Zeiss Vision, especially in the areas of

product life cycle management and IT demand management."

The new Microsoft solution is "more transparent and homogeneous," and usability is improved, Witte said. Employees just need to log onto one system and click on different tabs on a single portal to pivot to different applications. There is no longer a need to start an extra program just to make another request.

In addition, no longer are multiple servers deployed around the company. Instead, everything that Carl Zeiss Vision needs is concentrated in a HP services and data center.

Riegg said: "This project implementation helped us a lot. We've grown as a result of a merger of two companies, and it is crucial to the entire company that we continue to grow and work together effectively."

Microsoft Server Product Portfolio

For more information about the Microsoft server product portfolio, go to: www.microsoft.com/servers/default.mspx

For more information about Microsoft SharePoint, go to: www.microsoft.com/sharepoint

For more information about Microsoft Exchange Server, go to: www.microsoft.com/exchange

Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio

- Office SharePoint Server 2007
- Exchange Server 2007