Sixt: Germany's leading car rental company brings Avira on board

This is what they call a win-win situation: the user is looking to change over to more powerful technology, requiring a virus protection program to meet its stringent demands. This was what happened in Sixt's case: Avira made the most of its opportunity and successfully sold the benefits of its software to the company, which offers top-class mobility services worldwide.

It has taken Erich Sixt about 40 years to turn the family business founded by his grandfather in 1912 into an internationally active concern. In 2007, the company's more than 2,300 employees attained a turnover of around euro 1.6 billion. The fleet now numbers 70,000 vehicles. The mood at the company's headquarters in Pullach is upbeat and people are confident that this growth is set to continue.

Information Technology has proven itself to be a key factor in this rapid growth. It must be totally reliable because it needs to guarantee that computer systems operate absolutely smoothly on a day-to-day basis. More and more service counters where customers can book cars and collect keys are being added all the time to the Sixt network, which now encompasses 90 different countries. The data gathered in this way must be processed as promptly as possible at administrative level - a task handled at numerous computer display workstations each day. Most users at Sixt work on so-called thin clients instead of PCs; these are managed centrally as part of server-based computing.

Shortly before Sixt came across Avira, a decision was made in the IT Department to launch a major migration project. According to system administrators Thomas Rickert and Torsten Derschug, Sixt had decided to change the tried-and tested 32-bit operating system version used for its terminal servers to the 64-bit version of the Windows 2003 server. The problem: the virus protection solution previously used on the terminal servers did not support 64-bit technology, while the successor product caused difficulties on the new Citrix servers. "This meant that the operating system update also necessitated a change in anti-virus software," explains Derschug.

Head office in Pullach: The Sixt name is synonymous with premium cars, innovative products and a high standard of service and quality

Once the decision had been made, the changeover went very quickly indeed. Sixt analyzed Avira's offer immediately and took a closer look at the alternative software solutions available. In the meantime, Avira took the

opportunity to obtain certification for its solutions for Citrix. This meant that an important hurdle was now out of the way. Of course there were other factors in reaching the decision, for example the familiarity of the Avira name. "My colleagues in the IT Department are all enthusiastic private Avira users," explains Rickert. "Avira also confirmed this positive impression when deployed in the business environment." Plus point number two: Avira AntiVir beat the competition in a test installation. The solution achieved convincing results with higher detection rates.

Naturally, Rickert, Derschug and their colleagues chose to err on the side of caution when selecting the new software. Administration was to require only minimal effort. Sixt wanted a solution that would be intuitive to operate,

Keeping tabs on hundreds of computers: as system administrators, Thomas Rickert (right) and Torsten Derschug are responsible for the corporate network and IT security at Sixt

while also offering top-class support from the vendor. "Naturally, we had no interest in a provider who would leave his customers waiting in a queue. We require a reliable and flexible software provider," says Rickert, succinctly, describing the yardstick used to measure Avira.

The contracts were signed in August. The systems were changed over by April 2009. It didn't take long to get used to the new security solutions. "The manual guides you clearly

through the installation, as well as the initial configuration," says Rickert. Cooperation with Avira Support has worked well so far. The support team is fast and efficient - both by phone and email. "It is a real advantage to have a vendor who is located nearby," says Rickert, emphasizing another plus point. If help is ever needed urgently, Sixt can be sure that an expert will be available very quickly indeed.

AntiVir Server is part of the Avira network bundle and is installed on various servers. Sixt decided on AntiVir Professional/Workstation for individual desktop workstations. Initial results indicate that Sixt made a wise choice. For example, Rickert is full of praise for the function that enables the system resources used for a virus check to be adjusted manually. "The virus check runs at the appointed time without causing any noticeable loss of performance on the machines."

Thomas Rickert and Torsten Derschug are agreed: so far, the decision to choose Avira to help in the fight against viruses has proven to be a good one for Sixt. Rickert summarizes: "We have found a partner who takes the wishes and needs of its customers seriously and who is available around the clock."

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