Phonak – all ears for efficiency and flexibility.

T··Systems···

Global network for performing exchange, more local freedom and centralized application operation.

Phonak AG focuses on the quality of life of its customers. This is because it specializes in the development, production and global sales of hearing systems for individual needs. With T-Systems on its side, the company has gained a new state-of-the-art data network with the potential for expansion. It aids the quest for efficient, centralized application operation as well as for the local freedom at locations to support their customers individually and with high quality service. Dietmar J. Böhm, Corporate IT Director at Phonak explains that the response times are so quick that the users do not notice that they are utilizing a centralized rather than a local application over a wide area network (WAN). From project management right through to the handling of invoices, everything has become easier and significantly more transparent for all those involved.

At a glance.

- Setup and operation of a state-of-the-art WAN based on MPLS to increase efficiency by 20%
- Highest security level and 24/7 availability through a single point of
- contact, monitoring and service desk
- Enables centralized application operation, e.g. through prioritized data traffic
- Improves transparency, e.g., in the supply chain, through the
- centralization of applications
- Supports individual, local customer care by the locations as well as over the Internet
- Improves international project work
- Facilitates work for the Phonak IT unit via simple and direct interface to the provider
- Scalable and extendable network supports growth and rapid responseto market requirements
- Fast network realization by T-Systems in accordance with Phonak's
- project plan
- Distributed over 40 locations on all continents
- Connection speeds of 2–10 Mb/s as required
- Distributed, local Internet breakouts

The reference in detail.

The customer.
Phonak has been developing, producing and selling leading hearing and radio-based systems for over 60 years. With its head-quarters in the small Swiss town of Stäfa, the company offers a complete product range of hearing systems. This includes wireless communication systems for audiological applications and wireless communication systems for use in the areas of tourism, studio and security. Their portfolio also includes professional hearing protection solutions. Phonak AG belongs to the Sonova Group which is the leading provider of hearing aids worldwide, with a total of over 5,300 employees in 40 subsidiaries, employed at 60 locations, and is represented, together with sales partners, in around 100 countries.

The task.
Due to significant growth in the past few years, global voice and data exchange within the corporate group has become increasingly slower. In actual fact the corporate network was unable to cope with the increasing requirements, e.g., due to the centralization of systems and the increase in data traffic. A global corporate network is intended to reliably regulate the exchange within the group companies and with sales partners. The customer wanted to be more flexible whilst also improving security, availability, stability and speed. Simultaneously, Phonak planned to switch the local operation of ERP applications over to a standardized, centrally provided SAP landscape. In addition to the centralization of the main systems, diversified Internet outputs per continent or location were also requested in order to optimally support the local sales activities. The aim is to operate the entirely new network structure requiring as little effort as possible for Phonak and its approximately 50-man IT team.

The solution.
T-Systems was awarded the contract to set up and operate a state-of-the-art wide area network (WAN) based on MPLS. In this private and secure corporate network various local networks were replaced with a homogenous network across all geographical boundaries. At the same time, the locations were linked up to central data centers. All employees are now connected to the new network and communicate over the Internet using encryption. With prioritized data traffic (Quality of Services), SAP data is given priority over general data traffic. Voice and multimedia services such as video conferences are also given preferential treatment and run in real time. On the other hand, e-mails are only passed on if sufficient network capacities are available. The network is controlled centrally and is designed to have the highest possible efficiency. In the event of problems as well as queries, the customer uses a single point of contact and a service desk. To prevent this scenario from occuring in the first place, T-Systems monitors incident-free operation 24 hours a day.

Customer benefits.
For Phonak this network primarily represents a secure investment and a viable future. Now the customer can rely on a secure and fast network that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with short response times.

Prioritizing data traffic ensures the global, high availability of applications which are important for the marketing and design of Phonak products. Through the administrative workflow, which has roughly doubled in speed, and the significantly improved exchange in cross-border project management, Phonak is saving time and money. Furthermore, the company benefits from reduced average incident duration time by more than 50% as well as more than 50% fewer number of incidents. This is due to four factors: the homogenous network, the single point of contact, centralized monitoring and the service desk.

"We were impressed by the team's competence and flexibility", Böhm recalls. He claims that this improvement has "proved in an impressive manner" what T-Systems is capable of achieving. This also involved immediately recording Phonak's requirements and implementing them in a dynamic model. The improvement means that in case of acquisitions and location restructuring the system can be adapted quickly and simply in the future. Böhm also considers the following to be important: "We can now map the global supply chain in the system and obtain increased transparency, which is beneficial in a harsh, global market environment. We can now respond in a more direct way to new requirements. The necessary adjustments are very simple to carry out."