



Stephan Kasulke is the first Chairman of the newly founded association Zero Outage Industry Standard.

Zero Outage Industry Standard

“IT’S A DREAM COME TRUE.”

Stefan Kasulke, Senior Vice President Quality at T-Systems and Chairman of Zero Outage Industry Standard, talks about the evolution of T-Systems’ quality program into an industry-wide standard.

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Mr. Kasulke, how did you come up with the idea of forming the Zero Outage Industry Standard association after T-Systems had established Zero Outage as an in-house quality program back in 2011?

Around a year ago, Kai Brachmann and I were philosophizing – with some justification – about what could be done to prevent incidents in the future. In the process, we had the idea of moving away from the attitude of “We tell others what to do” and instead adopting another approach: “We work with suppliers and partners in jointly defining a way to do things better.”

When and how will customers start benefiting from the Zero Outage industry standard?

Customers won’t benefit until member companies base their components or entire system solutions on the Zero Outage standard. That’s when things get interesting for customers. Let me give you an example: once a manufacturer like Cisco starts marketing Zero Outage versions of equipment that are significantly less error-prone because they’ve completed special maturity and testing processes, system integrators like T-Systems can begin to build solutions made solely from Zero Outage components.

How did you persuade heavyweights like Cisco, Dell EMC or SAP to join the association?

SAP, for one, didn’t need a lot of persuading. You see, SAP provides integrated system solutions of its own and so faces the exact same challenges as T-Systems. Partners who aren’t integrators required a bit more convincing, however. The biggest selling point is that they can lower their technical support costs and offer customers higher overall availability. Customers are generally willing to pay more for that kind of improvement.

Have other companies signaled their interest in joining?

We’re excited that IBM recently decided to come on board. The whole company joined, including its professional services, hardware and software divisions. That’s quite a coup. Right now, we’re in talks with several interested companies and will be welcoming new partners shortly.

What are the association’s next milestones?

First, we will publish Release 2 and 3 of the standard in spring and winter 2017. These releases will be fascinating from a technical perspective because they incrementally add new standards to the technology level, one layer at a time. We have a roadmap and plan to make considerable headway with each release.

What does it mean to you personally to be elected as the association’s Chairman?

It’s primarily a big responsibility. And so now I have to invest a lot of time and energy in developing this idea until it’s mature enough to run under its own power. The chairmanship is an opportunity, too, though. Watching the best practices from T-Systems’ internal quality program evolve into an industry standard is a dream come true. Five years ago, who would have foreseen that happening? I didn’t, to be honest.

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