



When the pit goes digital

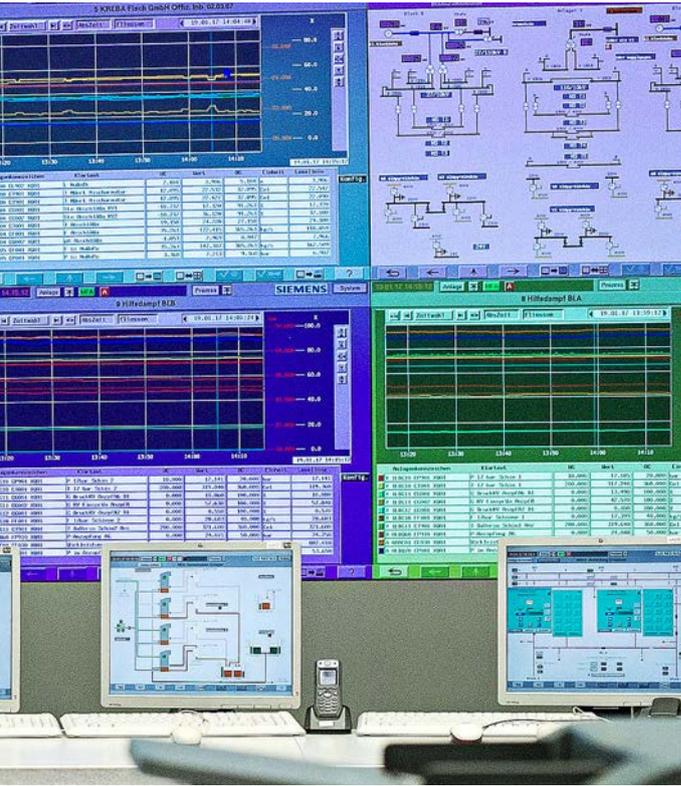
Since splitting off from Swedish power company Vattenfall, LEAG, Germany's fourth largest energy supplier, has been working full steam to build its own IT infrastructure by October 2018. One year in, it has reached the halfway mark – right on schedule.

COPY — Birgit Wölker

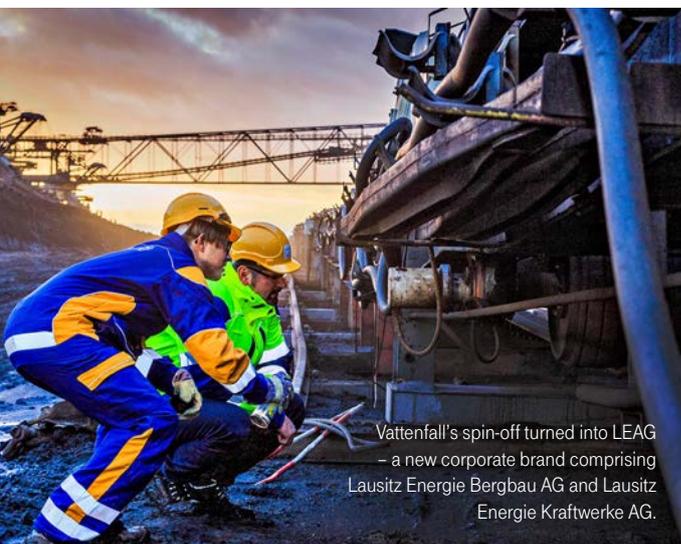
The first set of IT applications has been established at LEAG in a 1-to-1 transition, accompanied by the roll-out of a comprehensive IT service management system. Other services and applications will be migrated by October 2018 and supported in ServiceNow, the ITSM system. Although LEAG is traditionally a mine and power plant operator, its digital transformation has been sending out the kinds of signals that typify more “future-oriented” businesses. From the moment the digital change process kicked off, LEAG's decision makers made one thing clear: they wanted to do things right and completely modernize the company while giving employees the best possible service experience. Management advanced this vision by devoting plenty of attention to it and leading the way with supportive initiatives. “We want to enshrine digitization as a core value in the new LEAG's DNA, right alongside safety and reliability,” said Sven Maaß, Head of IT Infrastructure at LEAG. “After all, our company has to

fulfill its public service obligation. There's an art to reconciling the legal requirements with the technical possibilities. But it's definitely worth the effort.”

Having conceived of a vision, LEAG put out a call for tenders for a provider of infrastructure-as-a-service and another call for a solution to digitally support all the IT service management processes. In the end, the nod went to T-Systems, as the ICT partner, and operational services (OS), the T-Systems subsidiary that operated the ITSM solution that held the most appeal for LEAG: ServiceNow, the only tool to offer a diverse menu of features. And that impressed the decision-makers. “ServiceNow feels like a ‘do-everything’ platform. We haven't even begun to tap its full potential,” continued Maaß. With the automated IT platform solution, service processes will run almost entirely on their own. That's important for efficiency reasons, too: the energy market is under pressure; competition is rising. New approaches and leaner processes are needed to remain competitive.



With ServiceNow, incident, problem and change management is quick, simple, secure and reliable. It streamlines activities in the IT back office by automating standard processes and freeing up more time for employees to devote to their core business. In addition, it serves as the central ordering, organization and interaction platform for all the company's departments. An employee needs a laptop with a dust cover? No problem: she just has to select the product from a preconfigured service catalog on the self-service portal and place the order with a mouse click. Like any online order placed at home, she can track her new computer's shipping status right up to delivery. Or what happens if an employee's PC starts malfunctioning? An error report is immediately submitted, processed and answered with an acknowledgment when the error is fixed.



Vattenfall's spin-off turned into LEAG – a new corporate brand comprising Lausitz Energie Bergbau AG and Lausitz Energie Kraftwerke AG.

At its headquarters in Cottbus, LEAG manages power plant and lignite businesses that generated EUR 3.4 billion in revenue in 2016.

ABOUT OPERATIONAL SERVICES

OS is one of Germany's leading ICT service providers for data center operations, network operations and application hosting. Its ICT experts and seasoned consultants design, support and manage outsourcing projects throughout the entire project lifecycle, leveraging specific expertise from a broad range of industries. At highly available, highly secure data centers located at nine sites throughout Germany, OS hosts central and local standard and custom applications, network and other operating environments and secure cloud solutions.

The solution supports HR, too. From questions about paychecks and training courses to orders for protective clothing or health check-ups, all requests are automatically routed through the platform to a speedy resolution. Processes will be fast, in contrast to the old paper-based system in which documents such as parental leave requests were manually carried from one desk to the next. Being a cloud service (SaaS/PaaS), OS's ServiceNow supports real-time document editing and sharing so that all employees have access to the latest data right away without having to worry about obsolete versions. "There's another benefit, too. The tool is so smart and intuitive that employees need very little training. They can start using all the time-saving features right away," said Maaß. All LEAG employees – around 8,000 in total – will have access to the user-friendly services. Data protection is guaranteed. Since LEAG is subject to the German IT Security Act for Critical Infrastructures, one of its top priorities is to store data in the kind of German data centers that T-Systems and OS operate.

To implement such a sophisticated system on a tight schedule, functions are installed out of the box, one step at a time. Maaß explained, "We prioritized the must-haves and the nice-to-haves in order to keep LEAG's business running first of all. OS, following my own favorite motto, 'Keep IT simple', helped us reduce complexity to the bare essentials that we could handle and thoroughly familiarized us with the solution through workshops. Next, we plan to start picking all the other flowers that ServiceNow offers just off the beaten path."

For example, the partners plan to give the blue-collar workers digging in the pit access to the new platform solution through local terminals. Field support staff will also be issued mobile devices so service units can immediately see and respond to new orders wherever they may be.

"ServiceNow provides everything-as-a-service – but you don't have to implement everything from the beginning. Instead, you start with one use case, flexibly develop the next one and make adjustments along the way. Nothing's chiseled in stone. That way, employees see that their input is valued and considered, too," said Dr. Ulrich Müller, Managing Director of operational services (OS). "LEAG is evolving from a demand-focused to a delivery-focused organization at full speed and is tackling this challenge beautifully. When IT and operations move closer together like this and the processes are integrated intelligently, digital transformation can become an energy field for success."

For more information:



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