SUCCESS STORY

NETCONNECT GERMANY

Business transformation and application operation from a single source supports a high-availability IT environment

Transforming the way in which providers of gas services process and communicate increasing volumes of data while conducting business as usual

NetConnect Germany (NCG) sought a tailor-made and, where possible, industrialised IT solution for managing high volumes of gas data.

Key points

- Professional services from a single source with central, end-to-end responsibility

- Improved core processes such as daily balancing, purchasing and sale of control energy

- Transition, implementation, operation, application management and governance services

The challenge

NetConnect Germany is responsible for balancing the group management of six partners and managing gas data in Germany's first common gas market area.

The German gas market has seen an increase in the volume of data being processed and the ensuing requirements placed on IT systems. This situation will speed up in 2014 and 2015 as a result of the implementation of European regulations (ACER/ENTSOG). This will lead to shorter reaction and processing times and greater amounts of data to be processed.

Enabling IT applications must be capable of meeting increased demand in terms of reliability, availability and performance. NCG recognised that it had to implement these requirements in its software solutions. In addition, NCG sought to ensure 24/7 availability for its processes and enable multiple accounting per day.

Our solution

IT-enabled service provider Sopra Steria has been providing NCG with business transformation consulting services since 2008. The success of this partnership led to the collaboration being extended to include IT service management. Sopra Steria also developed a high-availability solution for Infrastructure Services, running GAS-X, a product suite developed for and specifically applied in the European gas market.

In this expanded role as a trusted strategic partner, Sopra Steria provides end-to-end capabilities, from product development to integration and operation. The extended collaboration incorporates:

- GAS-X solution featuring standardised applications such as energy data management (EDM) and balancing and capacity management

- Inclusion of additional applications in hosting and in application management

Delivering Transformation. Together.

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- Support for daily business processes

- Proactive monitoring of Service Level Agreements

- Control of other service providers for NCG

- Extension of service shift patterns, for example with weekend working

- Extended Service Delivery Management and Project Management Office

How we work together

Sopra Steria draws on more than 25 years' experience in the energy and utilities sector. Having provided NCG with business transformation consulting services for a number of years, Sopra Steria is now working as NCG's strategic partner and main service provider for application management. Regular strategy meetings at decision-maker level ensure that solutions for future challenges are developed early on. This collaborative relationship has established mutual trust and a shared vision of how to work together to transform NCG's business.

To guarantee the quality of the service delivered, Sopra Steria has an internal control system conforming to the IDW PS951 Type B auditing standard, the German equivalent to the American SAS70 standard. This was a precondition of the extended partnership with which Sopra Steria readily complied.

NetConnect Germany's Head of Operations Andreas Manderfeld comments: "We need an absolutely high-performance and high-availability software and hardware environment in order to be able to offer our gas services reliably. Sopra Steria has been our strategic partner and application management provider since 2008 and contributes significantly to ensuring that these requirements are met."

Results and benefits

The expansion of the collaboration between Sopra Steria and NCG has brought about a number of benefits:

- Uniform approach to transition, implementation, operation, application management and governance from one source

- Support for NCG's core processes, such as those governing daily balancing, purchasing and sale of control energy

- Process improvement through a holistic IT governance structure

- Single source management of all IT services (including those of other NCG partners) simplifies NCG's vendor management

- IDW PS951 B certification substantiates the quality of the services provided and facilitates transparent end-of-year reporting and auditing

- Single help desk (and contact number) for both applications and IT services creates a simple support environment for end users

NCG's Andreas Manderfeld adds: "We get tailor-made solutions – customised where necessary and industrialised where possible. The successful collaboration with Sopra Steria has given us a future-oriented IT landscape."

" The flexible hosting agreement gives us greater cost-efficiency. "

Andreas Manderfeld,
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