

Customer Case Study

Customer Profile

Randstad

Randstad Uitzendbureau is a Dutch temporary employment agency that set up business in Belgium in 1965 under the name Interlabor Interim. The Randstad brand name was introduced in Belgium in 1970, and Interlabor and Randstad merged in 1999 to form Randstad Belgium. In addition to temporary employment, Randstad Belgium offers services in the area of human resources and provides recruitment and selection, career advice, training and numerous other services. Randstad Belgium has almost 130 outlets (subsidiaries) with 1.700 employees and is head-quartered in Brussels.

Benefits

- Provides flexibility for employees to work from any location
- Improves security by avoiding local data storage
- Enables company expansion without adding IT staff
- Saves on maintenance and support

Porthus solution supports growth with increased business agility

The relationship between Randstad Belgium and Porthus started early 2005, when Porthus was asked to build a business-to-business solution. Good experiences with the unique project methodology from Porthus, Randstad Belgium decided to extend the relationship with Porthus for the forthcoming major consolidation project.

Business need

Until 2006, Randstad Belgium had central servers running services such as databases, as well as local file and print servers in its 130 outlets and in small offices located on site at large customers. All employees worked with PCs and laptops. This distributed computing environment placed a heavy load on the IT staff, which often needed to visit the local outlets to respond to help desk calls, fix broken PCs and solve other issues such as virus scanning. To decrease IT administrative workload and problems for employees, Randstad Belgium decided to develop a complete new architecture and set up a new infrastructure.

Preparing for the big change

Randstad Belgium, also responsible for IT in Luxembourg, asked Porthus to do a cost-benefit analysis comparing the existing infrastructure with a new Citrix XenApp environment with thin clients instead of PCs. *"Porthus got insight information about our operational costs, and was able to present a calculation based on the proposed infrastructure, that showed almost 50 percent cost reduction,"* said Marc Van Harnevelde, IT manager at Randstad Belgium. *"The conclusion was that an architecture that included Citrix XenApp with Linux-based Igel thin clients, should be able to lower total cost of ownership drastically."* Porthus and Randstad Belgium jointly conducted an application inventory and a proof of concept running major client applications in Citrix XenApp. A few applications needed terminal server-specific changes. Porthus advised and supported the developer team at Randstad Belgium.

Randstad Belgium and an IT architect, project manager and three engineers from Porthus migrated all 240 outlets and remote offices to Citrix XenApp with Microsoft® Windows Server® 2003 and thin Igel clients. All applications, including Duo, the in-house developed Randstad front office application, run on XenApp. Porthus documented the environment, and instructed the IT staff from Randstad for day to day administration. Porthus today still supports Randstad on-site weekly and conducts quarterly disaster recovery tests for the Citrix environment.

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According to Marc Van Harneveldt, IT manager at Randstad Belgium:
«**Porthus** really makes the difference in the successful delivery of our new complex IT architecture. We could not have done it without their knowledge and experience.»

Challenges

- Increase business agility
- Decrease IT administrative workload
- Decrease problems for employees

Keys to Success

- Positive proof of concept
- Create terminal server awareness for several business applications

Lower costs and easier support

Porthus evaluated numerous thin clients during the proof of concept phase, and found Linux-based Igel thin clients best suited for Randstad because of the integrated EID card reader. After introducing Citrix XenApp and thin clients the total costs of IT, especially for administration and support, have been reduced. *“Although we drastically expanded in number of employees and grew to a one-billion-euro company, the IT staff has remained at about 45 employees. This includes IT personnel for infrastructure and also developers and business consultants,”* added Van Harneveldt. *“Centralized applications with thin clients really made the difference.”*

Standard work environments improve business flexibility

The virtualized desktop delivered by Citrix XenApp enables the ultimate freedom to work anywhere with exactly the same work environment on laptops from employees in the field organization and from home locations. Laptops used from home have additional security with the use of Vasco tokens. Van Harneveldt noted, *“Working from home is especially important for the operational and branch managers. We have employment services and stand-by personnel for specific customers in hospitals and production plants who have to be available 24 hours a day including weekends.”*

About Porthus

Porthus is a leading OnDemand IT solutions provider, enabling organizations to manage complex business processes across company boundaries. Porthus leverages innovative technologies and solutions to allow its customers to interact and conduct business with multiple business partners, in a reliable, cost-effective and secure way. Porthus develops, hosts and manages software applications on a central platform; Porthus.net. The use of these applications is offered to the customers 'On-Demand'; the customer has 24/7 access through the Internet and pays for the service on a per-transaction or per-user/month basis. Porthus offers Professional Services, Managed Services and Software solutions in targeted markets in which Porthus acquired considerable knowledge and experience. The company delivers its B2B OnDemand solutions to over 1000 companies, covering customer locations throughout Europe and beyond.