MATRIX42

Case Study: City of Bern

Desktop Management – Easy as Can Be

Matrix42 Enterprise Manager eliminates the complexity
of Microsoft SCCM (System Center Configuration Manager)

Stadt Bern

In autumn 2011, the municipality of the City of Bern migrated from Microsoft XP to Windows 7 and also replaced their CCM lifecycle management solution by Microsoft SCCM. While they had heard about the challenging complexity of the SCCM solution, the IT support team now experienced these difficulties themselves.

Bern is the capital of Switzerland. With 135,000 inhabitants, the city, which plays an important economic role and is Switzerland's administrative center, is among the country's largest municipalities. In Bern you find international corporations and organizations as well as the authorities of the Swiss Confederation, the canton and the city of Bern.

"With around 1,800 clients used by the municipal employees of the City of Bern, desktop management is quite some work", says Markus Kaufmann, head of the Support 1 group within the information technology service department of the finance, human resource and information technology directorate. „While the project was still ongoing, we concluded an Enterprise Agreement with Microsoft, which also included the SCCM license." It came as an unpleasant surprise that it was quite difficult to actually use the license. Looking back, Markus Kaufmann says: „We as the IT support team are no SCCM specialists and we did not know how to use the software. Matters were made worse by the fact that no SCCM training was held for the support staff. But when we finally had implemented the Matrix42 solution, everything was easy as can be."

The IT staff of the City of Bern had their difficulties with SCCM right from the beginning, since the tool could not be handled intuitively, in particular when software had to be uninstalled. If systems were not deleted from the installation collection, programs were reinstalled during the next installation process, which, in turn, resulted in incorrect chargebacks within the cost centers.

Administration building of the City of Bern

The Challenge

In 2010, the City of Bern plans to migrate to Windows 7 across all agencies and authorities. As a result, 1,800 clients must be migrated from XP to the new operating system. At the same time, Microsoft's SCCM desktop management tool shall also be implemented. Handling support issues with this tool is, however, rather complicated, and so, the municipality is challenged to search for suitable solutions.

The Solution

At the same time, the Swiss Matrix42 team presented their product portfolio, including the Enterprise Manager for SCCM. This console adds functionality to SCCM and also features great transparency and ease of use. With the Matrix42 Enterprise Manager software rollouts, migrations and other desktop management tasks can be accomplished with a few clicks, providing fast and reliable assistance to the City of Bern.

Even while the project was still ongoing, the IT support managers already started to search for a solution to their problems. At the same time, the Swiss representatives of Matrix42 presented their portfolio to the City of Bern. When Markus Kaufmann and his colleagues had a look at the product documentation, they realized at once that the Matrix42 Enterprise Manager could help them to solve their problems. While the overall project "Operating system migration and new desktop management" took two years, the decision in favor of Matrix42 was made in no time.

Out of the Blue

Due to personnel changes within the project team the "operations" project was assigned to Markus Kaufmann, and this project also included Enterprise Manager implementation. "This was an out-of-the-blue project for me. But fortunately, the Matrix42 console is really easy to understand and to use, and so, I was able to accomplish all related tasks without any problems", says Markus Kaufmann. At that time, the beta version of Enterprise Manager 2011 was used. Since the launch of the final version did not fall within the project schedule, Enterprise Manager implementation had to be deferred until 2012.

With release 2012, many of the tasks and processes that had required a lot of time with SCCM could be completed much more quickly. Also, transparency was improved and the informative value of individual menus and reports was also increased.

"You can hardly imagine, but actually, our SCCM reports used to have no date and time logs on them, while Enterprise Manager provided all logging details. We were also able to visualize data within the business context very easily, without needing SCCM or SQL experts to help us. Now we have a perfect means to monitor the progress of a software migration process or compliance with our guidelines and are also able to take preventive measures in case we observe any problems."

Tangible Benefits

The municipal IT department – which, after all, consists of a team of 55 people – acts as internal service provider, and therefore, these automatic links and changes, which are addressed by the Enterprise Manager, were of particularly great significance. Benefits include not only very positive effects on the municipal license management, but also a reduced error rate. In the past, a lot of errors and mistakes occurred when licensed software had to be cancelled or cross-charged; if the software was not removed from the installation collection, the IT team received complaints from customers over and over again. "The easy handling of the Enterprise Manager is very helpful for the IT support staff and eliminates mistakes", says Markus Kaufmann.

Altogether, communications between users and the IT staff have become easier – and also more positive. While in the past software installations were not made visible to the users, since they were performed in the background, such installations are now displayed accordingly and the users can determine the time of installation themselves. "The great thing about the Enterprise Manager is that you don't need any special know-how", is the feedback of the IT support team of the City of Bern. After all, IT support employees are not necessarily SCCM specialists. If necessary, the Enterprise Manager can also provide additional instructions to the end users. "For example, no Office programs must be opened during Adobe installation, since Adobe installs plug-ins", explains Markus Kaufmann. "Most end users certainly don't know about this, and so, such a tip is valuable to ensure smooth installations."

Meanwhile the Matrix42 Enterprise Manager rollout for the municipality of Bern has been completed; users as well as administrators and the IT support team enjoy the related benefits. With these positive experiences in mind, the City of Bern now also plans to implement the Service Catalog to not only relieve the IT staff from administrative burdens, but to also provide users more participation – and this prospect brings a smile of anticipation to the faces.

Bottom Line

Matrix42 Enterprise Manager is a powerful add-on, with long-term additional improvements regarding the ease of use, transparency and performance of Microsoft's SCCM desktop management tool. The Matrix42 Enterprise Manager adds more clarity and speed to processes, improving the collaboration between the IT department and the lines of business.

"I was put in charge of desktop management tasks out of the blue; thanks to Matrix42 Enterprise Manager with its intuitive handling I was able to use the tool right away."

Markus Kaufmann
Head of the Support 1 Group, City of Bern
Finance, Human Resources &
Information Technology Directorate

About Matrix42

Matrix42 is a leading vendor of workplace management solutions. Matrix42 Workplace Management enables the seamless management of physical, virtual and mobile environments. Workplace Management combines client lifecycle, cloud, SaaS, virtualization and service management into an integrated solution that provides users transparent access to their data and services – from any place, at any time and from any device. Users can select and order services from a central marketplace. Service provisioning and billing is done, based on their individual company guidelines. This gives users' independence, while ensuring that the IT department maintains control and can leverage automation capabilities. Matrix42 Workplace Management increases user productivity and IT efficiency, while enabling the users to work with new technologies such as cloud computing and virtualization.

Founded in 1992, Matrix42 has been actively engaged in the dynamic IT market for more than 20 years. Over 2,500 customers worldwide work with Matrix42 solutions. Leading companies such as Infineon, Magna and Puma as well as integrators such as T-Systems, Raiffeisen IT, IBM, msg systems and Bechtle rely on Matrix42 solutions. In early 2008 Matrix became a member of the Asseco Group. With more than 14,000 employees and a market capitalization of about 1 billion Euros Asseco is one of the largest European software groups. Further information can be found under www.matrix42.com

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