SYSTEMS MANAGER, TEAM APPLICATION OPERATION SIKA AG

About Sika

Sika AG, located in Baar, Switzerland, is a global specialty chemicals company supplying construction markets and manufacturing industries (automotive, commercial vehicle, building component manufacturing). Sika is a leader in processing materials used in sealing, bonding, damping, reinforcing and protecting load-bearing structures.

Sika's product lines feature high-quality concrete admixtures, specialty mortars, sealants and adhesives, damping and reinforcing materials, structural strengthening systems, industrial flooring as well as roofing and waterproofing systems. Subsidiaries in more than 70 countries worldwide and approximately 11'700 employees link customers to Sika and guarantee the success of all our business relationships. Striving to deliver added value to all stakeholders, Sika generates annual sales of CHF 4.6 billion. Visit our website at www.sika.com.

Summary

Headquartered in Baar, Switzerland, Sika AG is a globally integrated specialty chemicals supplier for both the construction and manufacturing industry markets. With 100 subsidiaries and more than 11,700 employees dispersed throughout 70 countries, Sika is an industry leader with a global presence.

Maintaining the IT infrastructure from one centralized service server in Baar is not an easy task for Thomas Trauernicht and his staff of two email administrators. For the past four years, Thomas's team has been responsible for ensuring the continuity of their messaging platforms.

To add to Thomas's daily challenge, Sika is constantly acquiring new companies, solidifying its industry position, and expanding its global penetration. It falls on the shoulders of Thomas's team to not only transition and integrate the new additions onto Sika's Lotus Notes email environment, but also make sure they are always up and running.

As Thomas puts it, "I'm the guy who gets called if something in South America goes down in the middle of the night."

The Challenge

Thomas and his team faced two challenges: Sika has standardized the use of Lotus Notes for all of its 11,700 employees, and when Sika acquires a new company, it is Thomas's responsibility to ensure that the new subsidiary is seamlessly integrated into the system. It is also falls on Thomas's team to manage and maintain the global email system.

"Sika is in the concrete industry," Thomas says.

The IT architecture

From their offices in Switzerland, this three man team is responsible for maintaining a worldwide email system. What makes Sika's infrastructure unique is that they are a highly decentralized organization. They run a single productive User Domain setup in Hub/Spoke replication with a centralized service server (administration server, replication server and email gateway server) overseeing 70 countries.

Sika also has five Blackberry servers located around the world, all of which are monitored by Thomas's team.

"While Sika's subsidiaries are experts in the construction chemicals industry, their IT and email administration knowledge is rather low. My team and I are responsible for keeping the email system up so they do not have to worry about it and can stay focused on what they do best. "

Making sure everyone is up and running using Lotus Notes in a global company that has a low level of specialization in overseeing Lotus Notes/Domino is no easy task.

"With just three corporate specialists taking care of the whole environment and email infrastructure, we needed to provide administrator abilities, tasks such as "register user," "delete user" and "register group," to non-Lotus Notes specialists while always keeping an eye open to make sure everything was running smoothly."

The Requirements

With a total of three people overseeing the global email infrastructure, it was essential for his team to make sure email routing was working properly and to ensure that their Domino servers were running smoothly.

"We needed to be able to see at a glance whether everything was running properly or not, especially for mail routing purposes and other important requirements such as available hard disk space on the Domino server level," Thomas says.

Why GSX Solutions

While Thomas has been with Sika for the last four and a half years, his predecessor implemented GSX Monitor more than six years ago. This put Thomas in the unique position of having inherited GSX's solution. He has definitely found it to be a wise decision.

"GSX Solutions has been with Sika longer than me," he says. "The original decision was based on both the functionality provided by GSX Monitor as well as how easy it was to implement in such a dispersed environment. I've found GSX Monitor to be a very effective tool for preventing errors. Since Sika has a lot of subsidiaries, and my team has limited resources available, we definitely rely heavily on GSX to help keep us informed and running."

The GSX Experience

While Thomas was not the one responsible for choosing and deploying **GSX Monitor**, he is glad that the tool is at his disposal.

"**GSX Monitor** is very helpful. It allows us to know whether everything is running smoothly or whether something is starting to go wrong," Thomas says. "We've set it up to automatically send alerts to me and my colleagues, allowing us to quickly address anything that happens before it becomes a more complex problem.

"Thanks to **GSX Monitor**, we are fully aware of everything that happens in our entire messaging environment, and we can also quickly deliver comprehensive and actionable analysis and statistics to our management team."

Having recently upgraded their GSX version GSX , Thomas and his team are now also taking full advantage of the latest functionality including better management of their Blackberry users, which has become an increasingly important part of their mail infrastructure.

Regarding customer support, Thomas truly thinks that a product is only as good as the support provided with it.

Finally, **GSX Monitor** helps Thomas manage the global domain from one centralized location.

"A company like Sika, which has a very distributed infrastructure, but also has a small core IT staff to manage it all, can certainly appreciate the ability that **GSX Monitor** gives them to oversee the entire system, while granting limited control to the local IT personnel" he says.

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