

Sanacorp readies their infrastructure for the future

Sanacorp

Client profile

Sanacorp is Germany's oldest pharmacists' association and one of the country's leading pharmaceutical wholesalers. The company has been defined by courage and a pioneering spirit since its founding in 1924. Sanacorp continues to embody and live by the principles of a cooperative, while supporting onsite pharmacies on the road to digitization. Sanacorp's deep understanding of the needs of pharmacists helps provide around 8,000 pharmacies throughout Germany with a reliable, fast, around-the-clock supply of medicinal and healthcare products, as well as access to a comprehensive range of additional services. Sanacorp thus always acts in the interests of pharmacists. With around 3,000 employees in 19 branches, Sanacorp achieved operating sales of around €6.5 billion in the 2022 financial year.

Sanacorp, a pharmaceutical wholesaler, partnered with NTT DATA to modernize their infrastructure. We implemented a software-defined wide area network (SD-WAN) at all sites, with automation to reduce the manual effort required to manage the network. A firewall environment improves security, helping the organization meet regulatory requirements for providers of essential services.

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Keeping our network components up to date was becoming increasingly challenging as each device reached end-of-life status. With 19 sites, the manual effort was immense and could no longer be handled by the IT department in the medium term. It was therefore essential to implement a new network environment with a high degree of automation.”

Andreas Latka

Wintel Team Leader, Sanacorp

Business need

Optimization of infrastructure management

It was clear to Sanacorp that a profound modernization of their infrastructure could no longer be delayed. Many existing solutions had become outdated, and regular updates required significant manual effort, particularly from the network team. As a critical infrastructure (KRITIS) company, Sanacorp also had to meet new requirements from the BSI (Federal Office for Information Security), such as those related to building a firewall infrastructure. SD-WAN and wireless LAN (WLAN) environments also had to be built.

Based on their long-standing, successful business relationship, the decision was made to select NTT DATA as a solution and service partner to help achieve the project goals.

Solution

Future-proofed with new infrastructure

In the first phase of the project, Sanacorp worked with NTT DATA to analyze the existing infrastructure and define the specific requirements. Sanacorp then commissioned NTT DATA to evaluate several solutions. Sanacorp identified preferred solutions for the network, firewall and WLAN projects. After NTT DATA comprehensively evaluated Sanacorp's specific needs, the two companies selected the solutions based on performance and cost.

The implementation of the network components and construction of the SD-WAN environment were successfully completed over approximately one and a half years. One example illustrates the scale of the project: around 320 switches were replaced with next-generation devices, partly through an automated process. The firewall infrastructure has already been implemented. The remaining work includes fine-tuning, developing granular firewall policies and implementing or activating intrusion detection and prevention systems. The WLAN project is still being implemented.

Sanacorp was fully supported by NTT DATA throughout the introduction of the new infrastructure. After an initial joint pilot phase to determine sizing and configuration, Sanacorp was able to roll out the individual infrastructure components at all company sites independently. The implementation took place without any major problems; smaller challenges were resolved quickly in close cooperation with NTT DATA. The new environment is currently running smoothly. For each area, including the network, firewalls and WLAN, Sanacorp has a dedicated NTT DATA contact who knows the company's infrastructure in detail.

The entire infrastructure is supported by a co-scheduled maintenance contract, which also includes a Service Delivery Manager (SDM) as the central point of contact. The software was also consolidated into an Enterprise Agreement (EA), which is managed by NTT DATA's Customer Success Management team and software sales department.

Outcomes

Automation for maximized staff relief

The key advantage of the new network environment at all sites is the high degree of automation. Sanacorp now uses a network management system that provides comprehensive support for network provisioning, automation, optimization and analysis. For Sanacorp, this has optimized processes and reduced the burden on IT staff. It also offers significant potential for savings, since onsite support is no longer required for new implementations or ongoing maintenance. The implementation of SD-WAN and 10G also helps future-proof the company. Security has also improved significantly, helping Sanacorp meet the BSI's increased requirements for KRITIS companies through modern network technologies.

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