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SOLUTIONS

Insurance for the future with Category 6 Cabling

SYSTIMAX® GigaSPEED® Solution provides secure, future-proof infrastructure for three organizations in joint move to new offices

The Union of Public Insurers, a professional association representing members' interests, and Deutsche Rückversicherung AG, which offers reinsurance to commercial customers, are closely related organizations. In addition to occupying the same Düsseldorf offices, they share a communications infrastructure serving more than 150 employees using desktop-PC's. Also in the same premises is the software company, ÖDAV GmbH.

Whilst autonomous, the three organizations sometimes share the same network to exchange information. When they all relocated to new premises within the city of Düsseldorf, providing a new IT infrastructure to meet their combined needs, without compromising confidentiality, was a significant project.

"It was a delicate exercise," said Dr. Wolfgang Zipp, Systems Manager at Deutsche Rückversicherung. "Because when we decided to update our IT infrastructure, we had to conform to and implement special security requirements."

The original building was equipped with a Token Ring Type 1 cabling system using an STP (shielded twisted pair) solution. There was no doubt that such a solution would not meet future requirements and

that a change from Token Ring to Ethernet was essential. However, it had to be decided whether to continue with shielded cable or choose a UTP (unshielded twisted pair) type. "For a final decision we relied on the expertise of our partner, networking specialist Total-e," explained Dr. Zipp.

Total-e (Total Electronic Business Solutions) is a certified SYSTIMAX® BusinessPartner and offers complete networking solutions, including all active and passive components. The company currently employs almost 100 people at five locations in Germany, and nearly 300 people world-wide.

Deutsche Rückversicherung AG initially appointed Total-e to complete an audit and deliver a report specifying all key requirements for the new cabling. Every user of the new Ethernet system was to be connected to the backbone at 100 Mb/s and have flexible access to servers. Potential for a variety of sub-networks, taking into account security requirements, was also specified. For instance, ÖDAV was to have use of the infrastructure, but their sub-network was to be effectively isolated from the main network.

The new infrastructure was specifically required to support applications including document management, and both internal and external

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Dr. Wolfgang Zipp, Systems Manager at Deutsche Rückversicherung

information systems. Commenting, Norbert Deneke, Dr Zipp's Deputy with responsibility for IT infrastructure at the Union and Deutsche Rück, said: "We are working towards a paperless office and, therefore, want to strengthen our communication with other public insurers in a closed network using Intranet/Extranet solutions that are independent of location."

Dr. Zipp added: "New applications, like image transfer, Internet access and communication via e-mail, made it necessary to proceed with a high performance, future-proof IT infrastructure."

An important prerequisite for IT partner, Total-e, was to select the best manufacturer of cabling infrastructure solutions. This company had to guarantee the highest transmission rates, and offer complete, highly stable solutions with the benefit of continuous product innovation.

Assuero Ferraro, Total-e's Product Manager for Network & Cabling Systems said: "We recommended SYSTIMAX® Solutions and their fully integrated SYSTIMAX GigaSPEED Solution.

"An important factor in the decision was SYSTIMAX Solutions'™ global leadership in the cabling market and ability to offer a complete set of components from one source. It also invests a large portion of its revenue in its SYSTIMAX Labs."

Norbert Deneke added: 'The SYSTIMAX 20-year warranty on products and applications in our cabling solution was certainly an important factor in the choice.'

It was also a priority for Total-e that the cabling solution should exclude any sources of interference. "We had to take installation errors into account as well as possible disruptions due to different grounding potentials," said Assuero Ferraro. "That's why it was of benefit for us to use a UTP solution, which minimizes such sources of problems."

The network cabling, spread over 3 floors in four parts of the building, used 30 km of SYSTIMAX copper cable and 4 km of fiber-optics for the backbone. Around 1200 outlets were installed.

According to Total-e, a special challenge was to ensure active and passive network components went live at the same time, even though they could only test each system separately. This was successfully achieved, and the complete IT infrastructure was ready when employees arrived at their workplaces in the new building, enabling them to start work on their PCs as usual.

"Our expectations were fully met by productivity of 95% for all systems on the first day after our move," said Dr. Zipp. "The technology and our technology partners had kept their promises."

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