

Full Package Solution with N1 AA by Sun secures SAP Basic Operations at mobilcom

Highlights

Company

mobilcom

Communicationstechnik GmbH

Business Challenges

Implementation of a basic environment for operations with a classic SAP/ERP solution including SAP FI/CA IS Telco, financial accounting, controlling for materials management, logistics, and SAP Internet sales. mobilcom was faced with setting up a high performance SAP system to service 4.65 million customers.

Key Requirements

mobilcom was looking for an integrator, who could implement the basic environment and also operate the landscape during implementation. The supplier had to train the mobilcom team to achieve the skills of an SAP basic consultant capable of managing the system entirely on its own.

Products, Services

Sun Fire E6900 Server, Sun Fire E2900 Server, Sun StorEdge 6320 as well as Brocade 3800 switches in SAN, Libelle Shadow Data Base, N1 AA Analyzer, Builder, Deployment Engine and SLM

Strong performance x 3

Implementation, operation and training

The name personifies the business: at mobilcom Communicationstechnik GmbH, everything revolves around mobile phone technologies. The telecommunications company markets mobile phone contracts under its own name, and at its own expense, for carriers such as T-Mobile, Vodafone and E-Plus. mobilcom sells its products and services via a chain of franchise stores, its own stores, and other distributors like specialized dealers. In all, the company serves 4.56 million customers (2.56 million of them with long-term contracts) through its two operations in Büdelsdorf and Erfurt, covering contracts to invoicing.

SAP replaces JDE Oneworld

Only a couple of years ago, this mobile phone service provider had set up the standard software, JDE Oneworld, customized for its specific requirements. In 2003, when a system update became necessary and it entailed high development costs, mobilcom decided to make a radical change by switching over to a new program: SAP. With its mass debtor contract account module FI-CA, a part of IS-T, SAP offers a customer-specific solution for telecommunications companies. "As a standard, this solution is already geared to our mass data business," commented Christoph Steffens, IT Executive Director at mobilcom Communicationstechnik GmbH.

The only handicap was the handling of day-to-day operation of the system, since the personnel of the mobile phone service provider had no SAP-experience, and lacked the know-how to operate the favored IT solution. "For this reason, we initiated a comprehensive tender process to evaluate two alternatives: outsourcing of SAP activities versus an in-house solution," explains Steffens. The suppliers contacted for assessing the company's options were asked to not only deliver the software and hardware, but were requested to propose ideas on how to train mobilcom's IT personnel for the tasks at hand. The main objective was to have in-house personnel administer the SAP system independently following implementation.

In-house option more attractive than outsourcing

The tender process resulted in a clear outcome: an in-house option was far more attractive than outsourcing. Three renowned international suppliers submitted their proposals. One proposal in particular stood out: that from Sun Microsystems. "It was coherent, commercially as well as conceptually," Steffens remembers. The training concept offered by Sun described very convincingly how the mobilcom team would be familiarized with the unknown, complex subject matter within six months. The aim was to put the team in a position to administer the system upon implementation, independently and definitively.

Sun's proposed training concept included theoretical tests for SAP certification from both operational and practical facets. "At the end of the day, we were not talking about attending some SAP courses on theory, but about training on the job, supplemented by theoretical instruction.



“Sun demonstrated excellent expertise in implementing the basic SAP solution, enabling us to overachieve our defined objectives and train our staff – for overall success in realizing the project.”

Christoph Steffens, IT Executive Director at mobilcom Communicationstechnik GmbH

For all these reasons,” sums up Steffens, “we considered the Sun Microsystems offer as being the best, and I can confidently state that we have not been disappointed.”

N1 Advanced Architecture, N1 AA, guarantees ideal resource utilization

Within a period of four weeks, Sun experts had to design the future production infrastructure environment: Sun Fire E6900 and Sun Fire E2900 server, with fail-safe installation in two separate server rooms with fire lobbies at the Büdelsdorf location. A fail-safe SAN environment, consisting of Sun StorEdge 6320 and Brocade switches, needed to be set up as an added component for the future production environment. In order to further improve data security, the mobile phone service provider decided to secure its data with a Libelle shadow database. The N1 Advanced Architecture tools optimally administer the SAP landscape. Currently, mobilcom uses the components Analyzer, Builder, and Deployment Engine to continuously optimize the landscape and utilize the infrastructure’s full capacity.

Management and reporting of service level reports on availability and performance is carried out by the SLM (Service Level Monitoring) module of N1 AA. Since the reporting process is integrated into N1 AA, auto-mated evaluation can be performed with a few simple mouse clicks. The theoretical introduction to SAP was also underway during hardware set up. The project time-frame required that the complete infrastructure had to be set up within a period of four weeks. In addition, a heterogeneous migration of the system had to be performed, since at the time the systems were still being outsourced.

A SAP Basic Consultant after only six months of training

Within the framework of Sun Managed Services, the Sun Microsystems team administered basic operations for 7.5 months, per the agreed on service level agreements, i.e. starting with the four week implementation phase, through to the launch of SAP, and until start of the training phase.

Following implementation, the Sun team first administered the system in a project mode, and then in a production mode from November 2004 until January 2005. Sun personnel implemented the system in parallel, and held simultaneous workshops for mobilcom trainees. Theoretical courses and certifications rounded-off these measures. On January 15, 2005 the mobilcom team took

control of the system. In order to assist the now certified SAP basic consultants with problems that could arise, the Sun Microsystems team remained onsite until the final system handover on February 13, 2005. During this four week long phase-out period, mobilcom personnel had to demonstrate their ability to administer the system on their own – without any intervention from Sun consultants.

Flexible, customer-oriented and competent

“Everything not only worked out well, it was better than anticipated,” said Steffens to commend the integrator after project completion, and in particular to show his appreciation for the flexibility and customer-oriented approach of the onsite team. “Since this system represented new ground for us, we had initially overlooked certain aspects, such as archiving,” explains Steffens. “The Sun team proactively assisted us with these issues, and offered ideas and approaches for cost-effective solutions.” In particular, the training system proposed by Sun convinced mobilcom management to postpone the launch for a month, in the face of the extremely tight project deadlines. However, the Sun contract needed a two-week extension only.

“Even with these time restraints, the Sun team succeeded in training mobilcom personnel efficiently, such that it was able to take control of the new system. This is impressive proof of Sun’s expertise,” Steffens adds. “We are extremely satisfied with the way SAP was implemented in our company,” underlines Steffens. “The system is running extremely well, delivering response times of under 400 ms that provide better performance than expected. Our staff is well-trained, and able to manage the system independently without any difficulty.”

Bottom line: Sun, always again!

“In the face of these time restraints, the Sun team has nonetheless succeeded in training mobilcom personnel efficiently, so that they were able to take control of the new system impressive proof of Sun’s expertise,” Steffens adds. “As a result, we are highly satisfied with the way SAP was introduced at our company,” underlines Steffens. “The system is running extremely well, with response times of under 400 ms being even more performant than agreed. Our personnel was well trained, so that now they are able to manage the system independently without any problems.”