Customer Stories



Transforming Workplaces: How USM Modernized Collaboration with Microsoft 365

USM U. Schär Sähne AG is a Swiss family-owned enterprise founded in 1885. The company builds modular furniture that can be customized in a variety of ways. The timeless and innovative Haller modular furniture system has been on permanent display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York since 2001. USM's headquarters are still based in Münsingen, the center of a network of 400 dealers in more than 40 countries, who are responsible for advice, delivery, and assembly.

Industry

Furniture & Design

Objective

Migrating to the cloud for a modern, flexible workplace

Solution

IT Modernization with Microsoft 365

CHALLENGE

USM had long considered modernizing its IT and migrating to the cloud but hesitated due to concerns about storing data abroad. This changed in 2019 when Microsoft launched data centers in Switzerland, easing security concerns and paving the way for a full infrastructure upgrade and company-wide notebook deployment. However, by 2020, the shift to remote work introduced new challenges.

- On-premises storage caused slow, unreliable VPN access.
- Unstable connections disrupted remote work.
- A flexible, efficient IT solution was urgently needed.
- High workloads and lockdown stress made planning difficult.
- Employee skepticism added to implementation challenges.

SOLUTION

USM partnered with Experts Inside for its IT transformation, leveraging their existing relationship and expertise. An initial joint workshop held in March 2020 laid the foundation for the collaboration, and the project plan was drawn up.

Experts Inside guided USM through a full-scale IT modernization by **migrating** infrastructure and applications to **Microsoft 365**, replacing outdated on-premises systems with a cloud-based, secure, and scalable solution.

- **Cloud Migration:** Transitioned USM's IT infrastructure from on-premises servers to Microsoft 365, ensuring remote accessibility and reducing VPN-related issues.
- **Integrated Business Applications:** Connected critical software, including ERP, production, and accounting systems, with Microsoft 365 for seamless data flow.

"Thanks to Microsoft 365, we've been able to increase our flexibility and productivity. That we managed to move everything to one system during the pandemic is incredible."

Thomas Flügge, ICT Service Manager, USM Group

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- **Collaboration & Communication Upgrade:** Implemented Microsoft Teams as the central hub for communication, eliminating inefficient email traffic.
- **Employee Training & Adoption:** Developed a transparent migration roadmap, multilingual video tutorials, and department-specific training to ensure a smooth transition.



- **Security Enhancements:** Introduced clear access controls, simplified security monitoring, and ensured compliance with cloud security best practices.
- **Ongoing Support:** Provided hands-on assistance throughout the migration, empowering USM's IT team to manage and maintain the new cloud-based environment.

Despite a high workload and the challenges of lockdown, the structured approach and close collaboration ensured success. Employees could track progress, compare department timelines, and engage in friendly competition.

Multilingual video tutorials and hands-on training ensured a smooth transition. Regular working sessions between USM and Experts Inside helped overcome technical challenges, such as integrating specialized software for furniture design with **ERP, Production, and Accounting systems**. Various apps and tools were upgraded and migrated to Microsoft 365, with cloud-based updates simplifying IT management.

RESULTS

By June 2021, USM had successfully completed its cloud migration. Employees now enjoy seamless collaboration through Teams, eliminating email clutter and centralizing communication.

Teams supports chat, telephony, and file sharing across all devices, ensuring a fast and efficient workflow.

Key results:

- Employees gained remote access to systems without VPN issues, improving productivity.
- Teams became the primary communication tool, streamlining collaboration and reducing email clutter.
- Business-critical applications operated seamlessly within the cloud ecosystem.
- Security was strengthened with structured access controls and better monitoring.
- The USM IT team became self-sufficient, confident in managing the new infrastructure.
- Experts Inside continues to provide strategic support, ensuring long-term IT stability.

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