



Customer Profile

Swiss-based Xstrata is a global mining operation active across six countries on four continents. Now, with more than 40 locations worldwide, the extraction company is growing and managing a diversified portfolio of metals and mining businesses.

Business Situation

Having recently undergone dramatic growth, mainly due to acquisitions, the diversified mining group found itself with a very diverse number of different IT platforms and technologies. This resulted in high support costs, global communication problems and lack of backup server security.

Solution

All of Xstrata's locations were migrated to Exchange Server 2003. Now with only one global address list and domain name, all employees can finally use the same, synchronized e-mail organization for seamless communication.

Benefits

- Consolidation into one domain name
- Smooth and seamless migration
- Cost-effective in-house solution
- Remote and simple implementation
- Improved connection, communication and collaboration of employees

A rapidly growing global mining company standardizes and streamlines its heterogeneous IT infrastructure through migration

"The broad functionality of Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 and migration software from Quest enabled us to migrate with zero impact. We achieved seamless e-mail consolidation and fast data transfer, and finally reached the common global infrastructure we needed."

Jason Wilkins, Head of Information Technology, Xstrata

Founded in late 2001 and with headquarters in Zug, Switzerland, the Xstrata Group is currently the world's largest producer of thermal coal and ferrochrome, as well as also being a major producer of copper, zinc, silver, gold and lead. Aside from a registered office in London, the company operates more than 40 locations in South Africa, Australia, South America and Europe and employs more than 19,500 people worldwide. To diversify its geographical and commodity portfolio and ensure long-term success in a competitive market, the company embarked on a series of acquisitions in recent years. As a result, new challenges appeared with regard to the overall IT infrastructure, as different locations were utilizing different, partially legacy systems. To run company operations more efficiently and prepare for further growth in the future, Xstrata decided to streamline and optimize its IT by migrating to Microsoft® Exchange Server 2003 and Microsoft® Windows Server™ 2003. The single Active Directory® forest provides several benefits for the diversified company, such as improved connectivity and streamlined communications.





"A great benefit of our migration is that personnel can now access the intranet from anywhere in the world. This is particularly important for a globally active company with many locations such as Xstrata."

Jason Wilkins,
Head of IT, Xstrata

Key Figures

Number of Users affected	10,000
Migration Time	Less than a year
Number of PCs affected	5,400

Customer Profile

Since its foundation in December 2001, the Xstrata Group has grown dramatically. The globally diversified \$15 billion mining group, which is based in Zug, Switzerland, and listed on the London and Swiss stock exchanges, has achieved the extension of its production portfolio mainly through acquisitions—such as MIM Holdings Ltd. in 2003. With close to 20,000 employees, the Group holds a significant position in major international commodity markets: copper, vanadium, zinc, coking coal, ferrochrome and gold, silver and lead. Operations are located in Australia, South Africa, Spain, Germany, Argentina and the U.K. Many mining facilities are situated in very remote and hard-to-reach areas, often hours from the nearest airport and not necessarily covered by a mobile phone provider. This makes an integrated network of IT solutions even more important, to ensure that employees can communicate and participate in the company's intranet structure.

Business Situation

With the broadening of locations on four continents and in six countries, Xstrata faced the challenge of a highly heterogeneous IT environment. The acquired companies were using a variety of different technologies—with Microsoft Windows NT being the predominant operating system. While a copper mine in Australia might have 1,100 PCs running on NT[®] 4 as its basis for Microsoft Exchange 5.5 Server, similar to headquarters in Switzerland, 400-plus machines in Argentina were operating on a Microsoft Windows[®] 2000 Server platform and some in South Africa used Lotus Notes for their e-mail. This patchwork of systems proved quite bothersome. "We came to the conclusion that instead of continuing with such isolated islands we needed to standardize our software infrastructure," says Jason Wilkins, Head of Information Technology at Xstrata. "We had massive problems in our global communication, high support costs, logistical bottlenecks and connectivity issues." The company's IT focus was directed on the

improvement of communications and collaboration, aside from performance, productivity, reliability, security and value issues. At the same time, business continuity had to be guaranteed during the process of converting to one single directory that all applications would be directed to.

Solution

"Because we are a Microsoft house, it makes sense to progress to what the market leader offers," says Wilkins. Having decided to forgo Microsoft Exchange 2000 Server in favor of switching directly to Exchange Server 2003, Xstrata entered discovery in fall of 2003 to plan for its first migrations before the end of the year. Quest Software[®] Inc., a software solutions provider based in California, provided a cost-effective software solution that allowed Xstrata to handle the migration work internally. Using a toolbox and planning approach, Quest thoroughly investigated the Xstrata environments and devised an outline for how to bring the original server (NT) into the target environment. Set up by a small team of merely four members, the entire design was ready within a week. The knowledge transfer and easy-to-use features of Quest's Exchange Migration Wizard allowed for the Xstrata IT staff to do the migration themselves. "It is a dynamic process," said Mike Baker, principal consultant at Quest Software. "Of course it requires the groundwork of discovery, planning, preparation, and the testing phase to see whether the plan will work." Sometimes a revision of the plan was required in the production environment to meet and manage unexpected challenges during implementation. "We took full advantage of the remote control capability offered by our software product," said Baker. "After pre-synchronization, we simply hit a button and migrated the remote location in the middle of nowhere over night."

Without disrupting Xstrata's business operations, which go on around the globe and around the clock, the migration process was fast and cost-efficient. Begun in December



With operations on several continents, Switzerland-based Xstrata is a major player in the world's commodity market for metals.

2003, about 75 percent of the migration target was met by late March 2004. The remaining 25 percent of the roughly 4,400 targeted machines was done shortly thereafter. The acquisition of Mount Isa Mines added another 1,000 computers to the project, which were migrated in early 2005. The speed of migration proved impressive: In Argentina, for example, it took merely 10 days in a running environment to migrate more than 400 PCs. During this process, the products provided by Quest proved to work just as well remotely. One location in South Africa was actually 100 kilometers away from where the information technicians initiated the migration. "The ability to implement remotely was a big advantage for us," says Wilkins. "We simply could not visit thousands of desktops worldwide." The software was installed at the hub, with 80 percent of all the migration done before it ever touched the end user. Microsoft Office Outlook applications, for example, were switched to the new server, but remained identical. A Quest consultant would help perform the initial migration and then entrust the project to a local Xstrata IT expert. "We brought in several servers and ran them parallel to the existing ones," says Wilkins. "Then we could migrate the site and switch off the old servers."

Benefits

After the smooth migration process, Xstrata had consolidated to one e-mail organization for seamless communication among all sites and all Xstrata users. That included a single global address list, online scheduling, the ability to easily move users around the system without having to assign them new e-mail addresses and the ability to share one domain name across the company. When compared to previously utilized e-mail products such as the 4.5 version of Lotus Notes, the advantages of a collaborative application environment were apparent. "We were looking to enhance security, reduce cost and grant anywhere access to our users," comments Wilkins. "And it worked very well."

The additional functionalities that Exchange Server 2003 offers also proved more practical among mobile users with laptops. It offers the speed enhancements and compression features that the regularly travelling Xstrata executives find practical. With just one user ID they now can connect to the intranet from anywhere, find the accustomed environment and access all Xstrata resources. In addition, the possibility to work remotely actually cuts down on the needed travel time, because some face-to-face meetings have become superfluous.

One such example is how financial reporting has changed within the company. "Before the migration, such data sharing was difficult, if not to say a nightmare," says Wilkins. Users struggled with differing Windows passwords at different locations, and the IT Help Desk received many inquiries about forgotten passwords, dysfunctional network printing or non-delivery reports. Some sensitive financial data could not be sent at all and used to take many days to arrive at headquarters via CD every month, thus slowing down the entire process of financial reporting. Such files are now transported by secure FTP server, which is connected to the Active Directory (AD). Thus, the AD, as the central administrative hub for user data and access privileges, facilitates

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the daily and overall administrative processes within the company. With the Exchange Server, all e-mails are now stored centrally and therefore secure. Before migration, mails had been stored locally, thus susceptible to loss in the event of a hard drive crash. And as Windows Server 2003 is far more reliable than NT, there is no longer any lock-up, due to Exchange Server and Outlook running more responsively for an enhanced user experience. The worldwide collaboration now in place was immediately felt in the significant drop of service calls. Previously, Xstrata's support team had logged dozens of daily requests for assistance from company locations around the globe. "Our IT managers all over the world can be more proactive now, instead of just reacting to issues of instability, slow or no connectivity, and the looming loss of data," says Wilkins. "We can now focus on actually improving user functionality rather than just fixing problems."

The entire cost structure also has improved. "Due to the Enterprise Agreement, we are no longer counting the numbers of servers but instead the number of desktops," says Wilkins. "We have greater flexibility and freedom and the whole package has proven a stable, known quantity." The agreement with Microsoft not only helps with issues such as legal compliancy, easier managed security

risks and a more stable environment: It simply provides Xstrata with peace of mind.

Partner Profile

With corporate headquarters near Los Angeles, Quest Software provides solutions for application, database and infrastructure management. Quest's expertise in IT operations helps more than 18,000 customers worldwide meet optimized targets for their enterprise IT and receive more performance and productivity from applications, databases and infrastructure. Quest's comprehensive management and migration capabilities are designed to simplify, automate and secure Microsoft implementations—with cost-effective solutions in mind to benefit the most from the investments made in strategic platforms. Among software offered by Quest are solutions for migration to Active Directory from Windows NT 4.0 or Novell NDS, as well as products for migration to Exchange Server 2003 from Exchange 5.5, Lotus Notes or Novell GroupWise. The seamless, powerful and comprehensive solutions support thorough migration planning and secure, automatic migration execution – with no interruption to the daily business workflow. Its distributed processing and robust project management features simplify migration processes. As a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, Quest was also named the Global ISV Partner of the Year in 2004.

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