



### Business challenge

As the global economic slowdown exerts downward pressure on government funding, Oslo Philharmonic wanted to optimize the cost of delivering vital collaboration tools to musicians and staff—but how?

### Transformation

Oslo Philharmonic worked with Item Consulting to migrate to a collaboration platform based on IBM® Connections™ Cloud—enabling it to shrink costs and increase its investment in revenue-driving activities.



Truls Gulbrandsen  
Director Personnel and  
Administration  
Oslo Philharmonic

#### Business benefits:

### Delivers

substantial operational  
cost savings

### Enables

increased investment in  
revenue-driving activities

### Supports

greater collaboration across  
the organization

## Oslo Philharmonic Migrating to collaboration in the cloud to shrink costs and drive investment in performances

The Oslo Philharmonic (Oslo-Filharmonien) is a symphony orchestra based in Oslo, Norway. Formed in 1919, the organization employs 108 musicians and 20 administrative personnel and plays around 65 concerts in Oslo each year. The company is organized as a non-profit, self-owned trust and is primarily financed by the Norwegian government.

*“Thanks to IBM Connections Cloud, we have achieved considerable cost savings—helping us to invest more in our music.”*

Truls Gulbrandsen  
Director Personnel and Administration  
Oslo Philharmonic

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## Making funding go further

In the wake of the global economic slowdown, both public and private organizations face the challenge of downward pressure on their budgets.

This was the situation facing Oslo Philharmonic, which receives around 85 percent of its revenue in the form of government funding. With its grants likely to remain flat for the foreseeable future, generating healthy revenues at the box office is more important than ever.

Truls Gulbrandsen, Director Personnel and Administration at Oslo Philharmonic, explains: “Our goal is to maintain our position as one of Europe’s leading orchestras. To meet that objective, we need to move spending away from back-office operations and toward revenue-driving activities such as international touring.”

For many years, Oslo Philharmonic has relied on IBM Notes® and Domino® solutions to enable its musicians and back-office personnel to communicate effectively.

“In the past, we were running our email servers in-house, which was a significant cost driver as we had to manage the compute, storage and networking resources ourselves. This involved substantial costs for power, cooling, back up, and external support if any issues arose.

“We realized that migrating to a cloud-based collaboration platform would enable us to achieve our goals. And because many of our musicians predominantly use mobile devices rather than desktops or laptops, we were confident that a cloud-based solution would make it easier for them to engage with the back office.”

## Achieving cost-efficiency in the cloud

“We assessed cloud offerings from IBM, Microsoft and Google against a set of key criteria,” recalls Truls Gulbrandsen. “Ultimately, we determined that IBM Connections Cloud and IBM Verse offered us the comprehensive range of collaboration tools we wanted—all within a cost-effective elastic payment model.

“As well as offering the best value of all the proposals we considered, the IBM solution seemed the easiest and most intuitive platform to use. And because we were already using IBM Social Business solutions, we knew that migrating to the IBM Cloud would be significantly faster than to another platform.”

To accelerate and reduce the risk of disruption during the migration, Oslo Philharmonic engaged an expert team from IBM Premier Business Partner Item Consulting.

Truls Gulbrandsen continues: “IBM put us in touch with specialists from Item Consulting, who offered us valuable support throughout the migration process. They listened to exactly what we wanted, and then figured out how to achieve it. For example, the team helped us to develop an automated system for resetting passwords, which is especially valuable for our musicians because they may need to access information on their rehearsals at times when the back office is closed.”

Working together with Item Consulting, Oslo Philharmonic migrated users from its on-premises IBM Domino email environment to a business social network based on IBM Connections Cloud.

Today, the orchestra offers its users integrated email and social collaboration solutions, including communities, activities and scheduling tools. Oslo Philharmonic is also rolling out IBM Verse™—delivering a streamlined email experience for its musicians and back-office teams, whether they access their messages on desktop or on smartphones.

Truls Gulbrandsen adds: “We consider Item Consulting to be a valuable partner, and we continue to work with them to add new functionalities to our solution.”

*“We estimate that we have reduced our operational spend by several hundred thousand Norwegian kroner per year—helping us to make maximum use of our funding, and support revenue-driving activities such as international touring.”*

Truls Gulbrandsen, Director Personnel and Administration, Oslo Philharmonic

## Increasing investment in performances

With IBM Connections Cloud at the heart of its new way of working, Oslo Philharmonic is decommissioning its on-premises infrastructure, enabling it to increase its investment in performances in Norway and beyond.

“We have achieved considerable savings on hardware, support and maintenance costs since migrating to collaboration in the cloud,” says Truls Gulbrandsen. “In total, we estimate that we have reduced our operational spend by several hundred thousand Norwegian kroner per year—helping us to make maximum use of our funding, and support revenue-driving activities such as international touring.”

Today, communication and collaboration is faster and easier for Oslo Philharmonic’s musicians and back-office personnel.

“In the past, we shared information about rehearsals and performances to our musicians’ via email, which increased the risk of important information being lost in the shuffle,” Truls Gulbrandsen explains. “Today, that’s all changed. We now add all information on our rehearsals and concert dates to a central calendar in IBM Connections Cloud, which our musicians can access from their phones anytime, anywhere. The new platform also makes it easier for our back-office personnel to communicate with their colleagues and with our musicians, who did not previously have much contact.”

## Encouraging closer collaboration

Social collaboration tools are helping Oslo Philharmonic to reduce its reliance on email to share information. For example, the organization now stores, manages and shares documents such as sheet music in the cloud—making it easier for its people to find the resources they need.

“Government grants are our primary source of funding, so it is extremely important that we submit a complete and accurate application for funding every year,” says Truls Gulbrandsen.

“With IBM Connections Cloud, we can share, co-author and collaboratively edit documents, which avoids the risk of version-control issues when sharing documents via email. We recently completed our application for next year’s government grant, and our IBM solution helped us to gather input from managers across the organization faster and more easily than ever before.”

Oslo Philharmonic manages a large amount of data, ranging from concert programs to audio and video recordings of performances created by the country's public broadcasting company. In the past, the orchestra relied on network-attached storage (NAS) to store these large files—but saw an opportunity to reduce the considerable cost of backing up the environment.

"We realized that an enterprise content management platform in the cloud would offer the security-rich, cost-effective solution we needed to store, back up and share large files," comments Truls Gulbrandsen.

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Truls Gulbrandsen, Director Personnel and Administration, Oslo Philharmonic

"IBM's strategic partnership with Box gave us the confidence that it was the right fit for our needs, and we have recently embraced Box Enterprise as our storage platform of choice for large files. As a result, we no longer need to receive broadcast-quality concert recordings through the mail on USB flash drives—the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation can simply exchange these files with us via Box.

"Similarly, we have now incorporated Box into our graphic design workflow, as it is particularly useful for handling the large raw image formats that our designers routinely work with. We find that using Box Enterprise to manage and share large files complements our IBM Connections Files environment, which our team uses for day-to-day sharing and collaboration."

He concludes: "Oslo Philharmonic is becoming a more integrated, streamlined organization. Having a centralized collaboration platform enables our musicians and back-office teams to work together more efficiently. And thanks to IBM Connections Cloud, we have achieved considerable cost savings—helping us to invest more in our music."

## Solution components

- IBM® Connections™ Cloud S1
- IBM Connections Files
- IBM Verse™

### Take the next step

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