



### Business challenge

Swiss Reinsurance Co. Ltd. (Swiss Re) needed to increase agility in its IT services to better support business demands. Its inherently complex IT landscape made it difficult to manage services from end to end.

### Transformation

Swiss Re created an IT service orchestration solution using IBM Cloud Orchestrator, IBM® Netcool® and IBM Business Process Manager software. The solution eliminates silos and manual processes, and it reduces the workload on IT operations teams.

### Business benefits

**250**

**work days**

saved per month as a result of process automation that eliminates manual tasks and team reaction times

**99%**

**reduction**

in delivery time for a fully configured Microsoft SharePoint site

**45,000**

**processes**

executed per month on the orchestration platform

# Swiss Reinsurance Co. Ltd.

## Accelerating application provisioning and IT operations with an IT service orchestration solution

Swiss Reinsurance Co. Ltd. (Swiss Re) provides wholesale reinsurance, insurance and other insurance-based forms of risk transfer. Founded in Zurich, Switzerland in 1863, Swiss Re serves its customers through a network of 70 offices globally. Its customers include insurance companies, mid-to-large-sized corporations and public sector clients.

*“The orchestration solution is about helping the different operations and engineering teams reduce their workload so they can focus more on innovation and making their service better.”*

—Roger Altorfer, Vice President, Automation and Orchestration Lead, Swiss Reinsurance Co. Ltd.

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## Seeking more agility and speed

New technologies are constantly appearing in every sector and industry, requiring companies such as Swiss Re to introduce new services and increase agility to stay competitive. “It’s very important that we achieve agility in our IT services so we can support the demands of the business,” says Roger Altorfer, Vice President, Automation and Orchestration Lead, Swiss Re. “Time to market is increasingly important; therefore, we need strong IT services that can be delivered to the business extremely quickly.”

Swiss Re’s business users needed to quickly and easily access new services, such as a Microsoft SharePoint collaboration site or Microsoft business intelligence

environments. But provisioning such environments can involve multiple applications and elements, including web servers, databases, and active directory groups and users. The user must be able to order access to the newly created systems. In the past, creating all these components involved multiple IT groups and numerous manual tasks.

The inherent complexity of the Swiss Re IT environment added to the difficulty of managing services across the application lifecycle. The company had been managing the environment, which includes distributed systems with multiple operating systems, mainframes and cloud services, using a mix of internal staff and outside vendors. As with many organizations, Swiss Re wanted

to take advantage of cloud services to improve efficiencies, but it needed to be able to maintain control over its data. “This complexity can only be managed with very strong processes,” says Altorfer. “And we had to take the time to think about how to create intelligent, modular processes that are vendor agnostic.”

## Moving beyond platform automation

“We were looking for an IT service orchestration solution and not the typical platform automation tool,” says Altorfer. “We were looking for a tool which had a very, very strong process engine that we can integrate with the various platform automation tools.” After reviewing proofs of concept (POCs) from several

vendors, Altorfer and his team worked with the IBM Germany Research and Development lab in Böblingen, Germany, to implement an IT service orchestration solution that combined IBM Cloud Orchestrator, IBM Business Process Manager and IBM Netcool software.

Implementing the project at Swiss Re required cross-company support. Altorfer advises companies attempting similar projects to gain management sponsorship and participation to help generate support across the company. “It’s very important that if you start such a project, you have strong management and senior management support. Otherwise it’s almost impossible,” he says.

Further, Altorfer suggests initiating such projects with small groups of early adopters to help the rest of the company see the value of service orchestration. “It takes a lot of time to convince people what the benefits are,” he says. Part of the resistance is simply human nature; change can be difficult. But another issue is that beginning the IT service orchestration project added transparency and showed the company where the bottlenecks were, providing ample opportunity for improvement, but also shining an uncomfortable spotlight on inefficient areas. “Our early adopters really understood that teams will always have limited capacity and that the way to support the business going forward is through automation and orchestration,” says Altorfer. It can be difficult for many business users to conceptualize the power of

service orchestration, so early adopters can help demonstrate the benefits and drive the cultural change necessary for the companywide adoption of the solution.

Working with the IBM lab team, Altorfer used the IT service orchestration solution to bridge existing technology domains, essentially transforming individual IT products, such as databases, servers, Internet Protocol (IP) addresses, domain name system (DNS) records or access products, into services, such as fully configured, supported and ready-to-use Microsoft business intelligence environments. With the Cloud Orchestrator software, the team created a modular approach to IT service orchestration, using open standards and defined interfaces. Because the solution is modular,

the company can easily transfer service management from one vendor to another, without losing the accumulated knowledge about the service.

Swiss Re deployed IBM Tivoli® Netcool/OMNibus and IBM Netcool Operations Insight software to monitor its environment and improve its ability to recover from an incident or error. The client integrated the Netcool components with the Cloud Orchestrator software, so if there is an IT issue, the Netcool Operations Insight software automatically triggers processes to resolve it using the new IT service orchestration solution. “So the solution is not only about orchestration, it’s also about keeping control of the IT landscape with the support of monitoring and configuration management,” says Altorfer.

As part of an initiative to reduce workloads across IT operations teams, Swiss Re implemented the Cloud Orchestrator software to automate lifecycle management processes for each new application it takes on. Altorfer’s group reviews each application and the associated use cases and then uses the Cloud Orchestrator software’s business process management engine to create, manage and control the processes.

“For every new application that comes in, we define how it will be used by the business user and what the user needs,” says Altorfer. “And then we orchestrate the entire lifecycle of the customer artefacts associated with the new service. That’s IT service orchestration in action.”

## Increasing IT quality

When Swiss Re first implemented IT service orchestration, it was executing approximately 2,000 processes per month on the solution. Today, it's executing approximately 45,000 workflows per month, which helps save 250 work days each month. By eliminating manual work, the business also improves the consistency and quality of the environments and applications it deploys. Additionally, the company is better able to follow

change management processes to keep the IT landscape stable in an increasingly complex world.

In the past, a user ordering a new SharePoint site would wait up to 3 – 4 days. Now, users are notified that their site is ready in about 5 – 10 minutes. Similarly, users can gain access to a fully configured server loaded with the necessary software, load balancers and orderable access items in less than two days, rather than 3 – 4 weeks.

These impressive results have helped Altorfer and his team gain the company's confidence. "The orchestration solution is about helping the different engineering teams reduce their workload so they can focus more on innovation and making their service better," says Altorfer. "Many other companies have exactly the same situation. They have different providers and small engineering teams. So it's very important that you start with the why. Tell the people the reason why we have to make such a change. And link it all to the business needs."

### Solution components

- IBM Business Process Manager
- IBM Cloud Orchestrator
- IBM® Netcool® Operations Insight
- IBM Tivoli® Netcool/OMNIBus

### Connect with us



### Take the next step

To learn more about IBM Cloud Orchestrator, IBM Netcool and IBM Business Process Manager software, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following websites:

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