



Business challenge

To ensure the success of its effort to migrate its customers to a new datacenter Swisscom sought to reduce the time needed to provision connectivity and eliminate errors associated with manual provisioning processes.

Transformation

Swisscom uses IBM Cloud Orchestrator portal and the solution's self-service features to build up all connectivity services. Service engineers now design based on service catalogs, and network configuration is performed automatically.

Business benefits

Reduces

time required to provision network connectivity in new datacenter from weeks to hours

Eliminates

man-made errors through automation

Increases

clients' access to both cloud services and fully managed services through the datacenter

Swisscom

Providing cloud orchestration and provisioning service to streamline network connectivity

Swisscom AG is a major telecommunications provider in Switzerland. Its headquarters are located at Worblaufen, near Bern. The company has approximately 21,000 employees and provides clients in the hospitality, banking and healthcare industries with outsourced cloud, connectivity, operation and data networks services.

"We can now deliver all these services—both fully managed services and cloud services—through our data center, using IBM Cloud Orchestrator, and give our customers options."

—Max Hoesle, project leader network automation and orchestration team, Swisscom

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Migrating to a new datacenter

Swisscom, one of three or four major outsource service providers in the Swiss market, competes on the basis that it is the only outsource provider that hosts all client data in-country. In 2015, Swisscom's network automation and orchestration team was charged with migrating all Swisscom customers to a new data center in the Wankdorf quarter of Bern; however, processes for building connectivity and provisioning Swisscom's networks were complex and largely manual.

"All configurations were done in the data center, and lots of engineers had to be involved—service engineers to define each customer's services, network engineers to translate those services into network designs and manually design those networks. Our processes required too much back-and-forth interaction between them," says Max Hoesle, project leader of network automation and orchestration at Swisscom. "It typically took as long as two or three weeks to set up connectivity inside the data center and provision services to the network, so the customers were demanding faster turnaround."

And with manual intervention errors are inevitable. So, not only did the automation and orchestration team need to ensure that Swisscom provision its networks faster, they needed to reduce or eliminate errors in network configuration.

The team's goal was to provision data infrastructure connectivity—error-free—within one-day of receiving a client's request for a new service. Provisioning connectivity services in the datacenter is a prerequisite for building server infrastructure and deploying applications and databases, but it became the primary cause for delays in that process.

Automating network connectivity

Swisscom, working with IBM Premier Business Partner Serima, deployed a range of IBM tools—IBM Cloud Orchestrator software, Business Process Manager software, and Netcool® Configuration Manager software.

At present, Swisscom has provisioned approximately 350 customers on a shared infrastructure in the datacenter. These customers are now running on this infrastructure, but each has a dedicated virtual environment where they access their services—a complete ecosystem where, for example, they can locate all their connectivity and hosting services, databases and web services. IBM tools are critical to helping Swisscom establish and maintain the whole chain.

Swisscom uses IBM Cloud Orchestrator portal and self-service features, along with Netcool Configuration Manager software, to build and manage all the connectivity services it makes available to customers. IBM Business Process Manager software defines best-practices and automates processes for provisioning the services operators provide to customers. The network automation and orchestration team uses its own proprietary code to generate the network configurations, which are then rolled out to the routers and switches through the Netcool Configuration Manager software automatically.

“In IBM Business Process Manager we have lots of processes and all of them are automated,” Hoesle says. “The operator can click on the services he needs for his customers, and the work process for those services is predefined in BPM. BPM then automatically triggers the provisioning process, without manual intervention.”

Streamlining service delivery

According to Swisscom, the IBM tools and resulting automation helped speed the migration of customers to the new data center, primarily due to a reduction in the time required to provision connectivity services. Those provisioning times were shortened from weeks to hours.

Along with streamlining processes, automation eliminated all errors produced through previously manual processes.

“Our operators or engineers use these IBM tools and self-service offers in the catalog there,” Mr. Hoesle says. “They can click all the services that the customer needs in the new data center and all the connectivity’s services are provisioned. We don’t need the engineers for the configuration; it’s done by the tool. And when we implement these services we’re confident that it’s done in the right way on our side and the customer side. Additionally, because we provision new services faster it costs our customers less to provide their services.”

Swisscom customers also enjoy greater flexibility. “In the past we had a lot of outsourcing customers who were requesting third-party cloud services, because cloud services were cheaper than our outsourcing services,” says Mr. Hoesle. “Well, Swisscom also provides cloud services, such as infrastructure-as-a-service or platform-as-a-service. We can now deliver all these services—both fully managed services and cloud services—through our data center, using IBM Cloud Orchestrator, and give our customers options.”

Solution components

- IBM® Business Process Manager
- IBM Cloud Orchestrator
- IBM Netcool® Configuration Manager Management

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Take the next step

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