



BRAIN FORCE helps Agis with realizing a new ICT-environment

Agis Zorgverzekeringen insures 1.7 million people, making it the largest insurer in the Dutch national healthcare system. It is an insurance company that operates nationwide, having arisen from a merger between the regional insurers Anova, Anoz and ZAO. The core regions for Agis have traditionally been the Amsterdam area, Utrecht/Amersfoort and the Apeldoorn area. The role of Agis as a social and entrepreneurial health insurer is to ensure the health of its members and guarantee that they receive good and affordable care when they need it. This is what drives the 2,000 staff.

When Anova, Anoz and ZAO merged to form Agis Zorgverzekeringen, the ICT infrastructures of the three health insurers had to be merged as well. Over recent years, the company has been working stepwise towards a central ICT organization.

Martin Stoel, competencemanager Network & Connectivity



Advantages

- Automated software distribution with SMS 2003
- New company-wide ICT-platform
- Structured packaging of applications
- High application availability

Consolidation

Firstly, steps were taken to get the various ICT environments to work together. Then the Agis offices in Amsterdam and Apeldoorn were closed and all the ICT systems were physically relocated to Amersfoort. That was done in 2002. Immediately afterwards, Agis decided to take the next step: a cleanup to produce a single, clearly-structured ICT environment.

‘At that time, we were using 592 applications and about 100 servers,’ explains Martin Stoel. ‘We wanted to consolidate and reduce those numbers substantially.’ Stoel is the Network & Connectivity Competence Manager in the health insurer’s ICT department. Together with his team, he looks after telephony and the LANs and

Fastly and efficiently packaging high volumes



WANs within Agis, as well as having the technical responsibility for the distribution of software applications. At the same time, Agis wanted to migrate to a new technological platform based on Microsoft Windows Server 2003 and Windows XP. The NT4 environment that the company used was no longer being supported.

Quick responses

Because the consolidation and migration project was too large to tackle in its entirety themselves, Agis opted to outsource a number of supporting services. The company kept the project management work in-house. After an internal inventory, about 300 applications remained that had to be packaged. To get this done, the health insurer contacted BRAIN FORCE.

'BRAIN FORCE is flexible and capable of quick switching.'

'We wanted to convert the selected applications to MSI, for distribution using Microsoft's SMS 2003,' says Stoel. 'After discussions with a number of parties, we chose BRAIN FORCE. Packaging is one of BRAIN FORCE's core activities, whereas others often just do it 'on the side'. What's more, BRAIN FORCE has an excellent reputation. And we soon managed to settle on a price.'

BRAIN FORCE's approach also impressed Stoel and his colleagues. 'BRAIN FORCE's procedures are fairly strict. That can be awkward, but it's also the best way to reach solid agreements. And it doesn't affect the flexibility: we've learned that BRAIN FORCE can respond very quickly. In fact,' says Stoel, 'their structured approach actually creates the extra bandwidth that lets you work together.'

Rapid throughput

Agis decided to perform the packaging in a number of blocks. Each time, a list was provided to BRAIN FORCE containing a subset of all the applications plus associated media. As well as applications such as Microsoft Office and other standard market applications, these included applications developed by Datagis, for example for workflow management and document imaging. The applications that allow Agis staff to use their PCs to access the data about the insured parties on the mainframe are crucially important. The aim was to keep the packaging process as compact as possi-



Martin Stoel

High quality MSI-packaging



ble. 'Software updates were not allowed during the packaging period,' explains Stoel. 'The environment was frozen, if you like. Because we wanted to minimize the chance of things becoming obsolete because we couldn't do any updates, the packaging had to be done as quickly as possible.'

'Each week 30 to 40 applications were packaged and tested.'

Thirty to forty applications were handled each week. These were delivered by BRAIN FORCE and tested in an SMS environment that Datagis had put together in Amersfoort, and then placed in the production environment ready for distribution. A BRAIN FORCE staff member, seconded on site with Agis, made sure that everything was always done correctly and on time.

Each time a hardware migration was carried out at one of the five Agis offices – over the course of four weekends, 1,800 new PCs with Windows XP were put in place, plus twenty or so servers with Microsoft Windows Server 2003 – Agis could then start distributing the applications. Stoel can look back on the rapid packaging process with satisfaction. 'All the applications were ready for distribution inside three months, as agreed, and they are all running with no problems.'

Products

- ▶ *BRAIN FORCE Packaging Factory structures and automated the application-packaging track for high volumes of packages*

BRAIN FORCE The Netherlands is an ICT supplier that simplifies complex technology and gives its customers maximum control over their server and desktop infrastructure, applications and processes. We design, implement and maintain solutions for the optimization of the IT infrastructure and the automation of application management. BRAIN FORCE is the supplier of the well-known and successful Packaging Robot® for the automatic generation of SoftGrid and MSI packages.

BRAIN FORCE is Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and possesses five competencies. Besides this, BRAIN FORCE is VMware Enterprise Partner, Citrix Partner and NEC Preference Partner. BRAIN FORCE The Netherlands (Veenendaal) is part of BRAIN FORCE HOLDING.

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