

Swisscom IT Services

Uses Sendmail Sentrion Message Processors to Provide Corporate Customers with Highly Available, Threat-Free Email Service

You might go to business school for years, but you'll never learn a more valuable lesson than the one Johnny Raetzo sums up in four words: "Happy customers come back." That's why, as head of messaging at Swisscom IT Services, Raetzo doesn't just focus on engineering and operations, but on the experience and satisfaction of the customers served by his group. And that's a lot of people—about 60,000 individual users who depend on email to do their jobs at many of Switzerland's leading telecommunications, banking and finance, healthcare, trans- portation, and public sector organizations. Add in the nearly 20,000 employees of Swisscom itself, and Raetzo has a lot of customers who depend on him and his team.

What does it take to keep them happy? In theory, not much. They simply want to be sure they're getting all their important messages without being bothered by spam, phishing schemes, viruses, or any other email-borne junk. That's not much to ask, but it can be a major technical challenge to deliver. Sendmail software has been delivering flawlessly for Swisscom IT Services for the past 10 years, so when the time came to upgrade the company's mission-critical email infrastructure the choice was easy. Raetzo's team chose the Sentrion Message Processor[™] for ease of migration, simplified management, and outstanding performance.

Swiss Enterprises Demand Swiss-Quality Services

Swisscom is Switzerland's leading telecommunications company, delivering services and products for mobile, fixed, and IP-based voice and data communications to residential customers and companies of all sizes across the country. Its subsidiary, Swisscom IT Services, provides corporate customers with a wide range of consulting, software, storage, support, and other services to many of Switzerland's most prominent enterprises. Swisscom IT Services is dedicated to providing each customer with "everything you need in simple, one-stop solutions with unbeatable quality and service."

Because email is mission-critical, yet notoriously costly to manage internally, companies are increasingly turning to Swisscom IT Services for intelligent, directory- and policy-driven email routing, hygiene, and storage. Swiss banks and other organizations dealing in highly sensitive,



CHALLENGE:

- Replace end-of-lifecycle hardware to modernize the email backbone
- Implement a uniform hardware and software platform to simplify management, increase reliability, and lower costs
- Provision corporate customers with exceptional managed email services and service levels

SOLUTION:

- Sendmail Sentrion Message Processors
- Sentrion Enterprise Anti-Virus application
- Integration with third-party traffic-shaping and spam-detection services
- Sendmail Professional Services team for system architecture and engineering implementation

private information particularly benefit from Swisscom's commitment to routing and storing email only on systems within the Swiss borders—a unique security benefit that Swisscom's internationally distributed competitors can't provide.

Taking a Great Relationship to the Next Level

For 10 years, Swisscom IT Services relied on an email backbone powered by Sendmail software running on Sun Solaris servers including the Sendmail MTA, Mailstream Manager, Flow Control, and Directory software. This architecture was exceptionally reliable, and the support provided by the Sendmail team over the years exceeded the expectations of a company that is, itself, dedicated to supporting customers as its core mission. As Johnny Raetzo notes, Swisscom IT Services and Sendmail have built “a strong relationship between both companies, based on mutual confidence.”

Despite the dependable, long-term performance of the existing backbone, 10 years is a long lifecycle for any major IT system architecture. When the time had come to consider a replacement for the old Solaris servers, a much better option was available. Sendmail Sentrion Message Processors could do the same job more efficiently, at a lower cost, and without the need for separate management of the email software and the underlying operating system and hardware. And because the existing policy sets, directories, management system, and other features already used Sendmail technology, migration, training, and management were much simpler than starting from scratch with a different vendor.

A One-to-One Migration

With a Sendmail architecture already in place, the migration team planned to manage risk by using the existing system as a fallback in case any problems emerged during the functional migration. It was a sensible plan, but unnecessary in the end. Everything performed exactly as expected.

Two solution architects from Sendmail worked on the project. One recalls how uneventful the transition to the new solution was: “Because of all the work that had been done over the course of the last several years, they were able to move over to the appliances one-to-one and have it just go. All the tried-and-true configurations, custom rule sets, routing policies, antivirus policies, and policy management developed for them over the last several years could just be taken from one system and dropped into the other. It all worked, and none of their investment was lost. The project was a success for everybody.”

Raetzo agrees that the Sendmail migration was the easy part. “We needed Sendmail in terms of system architecture and engineering, but for this large project they only needed to be on site for a few days,” he recalls. “The difficulty in this project was that we have more than 1,000 applications, just within Swisscom, that can send and receive email. Every application—for monitoring, for backup, for SAP, and so on—had to be moved from the old platform to the new platform.” It was time-consuming work to configure every application to talk to the new email appliances, but the Sentrion MPs handled all of the application messaging traffic with ease.

Easier is Better

Swisscom now has a best-practices architecture featuring 10 Sentrion Message Processors—enough to provide high availability and the headroom to expand by about 10,000 additional mailboxes. If a new customer needs more than that, it's a simple matter to drop a new Sentrion into the architecture with minimal configuration work and no service disruption. This flexibility helps control costs since there's no need to overprovision appliances today in order to ensure scalability for tomorrow.

BENEFITS:

- Easily handles processing of 35 million messages per month
- Intelligent directory and policy-driven message routing and delivery
- Enhanced security with more than 30 million messages per month rejected as unwanted mail—preserving network bandwidth, lowering email storage costs, and freeing users from the burden of unwanted messages
- Near-100 percent availability in compliance with customer SLAs
- Increased IT staff productivity and more than 20 percent reduction in management costs
- All data housed and routed in Switzerland with banking and financial traffic segregated in compliance with Swiss regulations

“As an example of scalability, in 2008, one of the clusters that makes up our email backbone had 137 unique routing targets, as of today that same cluster has 911 unique routes. In total, since 2008 our routing has expanded in complexity from 407 routes to 4475 today.”

— Johnny Raetzo

Moreover, there’s no need for separate management processes for maintaining servers, operating systems, and email software. “It’s always easier to manage platforms that are identical,” Raetzo notes. “It’s also easier in terms of support when you have everything at the same release on the boxes. And instead of logging on to different systems, tools, and settings, now we have a centralized management console for managing everything in terms of messaging needs.” As a result of consolidation, Raetzo estimates the company is saving at least 20 percent on operational and management costs compared to the old Solaris-based architecture.

Delivering the Services and Features Customers Want

Swisscom IT Services uses a Symantec Brightmail front end for initial traffic shaping and message filtering. Incoming messages judged likely to be good by that system are passed on to the Sentrion for spam handling, anti-virus analysis, policy enforcement, and intelligent message routing based upon customer specific directory attributes.

Services such as SMS, MMS, Fax, and encryption reside on top of the messaging backbone, and backend storage for archiving and auditing is based on Exchange. All these technologies integrate easily with the Sentrion to provide customers with a full range of service options.

Policy sets can be customized to meet specific customer needs, and temporary policies can be inserted on demand to handle audit reporting and other special requirements. Banking and financial services customers even have their own dedicated wing of the email backbone to ensure regulated transactions are segregated from normal email traffic, and Swiss banking rules are enforced by policy. Not only does the Sentrion ensure that regulated messages are routed only within Swiss borders—it also synchronizes seamlessly with individual corporate directories to provide intelligent, policy-driven message routing within each customer’s domain and organizational structure. And as routing targets increase exponentially across Switzerland, the Sentrion’s intel-ligent routing ensures that email is delivered reliably and on time.

Happy Customers Come Back

Even more than choice, flexibility, and responsiveness, what corporate customers look for in an email provider is dependability. The new archi-tecture is now serving approximately 60,000 corporate mailboxes and processing 35 million messages per month—with more than 30 million identified and rejected as spam, viruses, and other unwanted mail. End-users are getting the mail they need to do their jobs, with virtually no spam or malware clogging their inboxes or threatening their security.

And they’re getting service they can absolutely count on. According to Raetzo, “We do monthly SLA reporting for all our services, and I’m happy to say that we’re consistently reaching near-100 percent availability.”

With these results, Swisscom IT Services is clearly keeping its customers happy. Retention rates are near-perfect. New prospects are knocking at the door. Internal Swisscom customers are getting the reliable email services they need to support and grow the entire company. And across the country, Swisscom IT Services is cementing its reputation as the provider Swiss companies can trust to handle one of their most important assets—the email that drives business productivity.

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