

This Project Profile is provided in order to illustrate past work experience and accomplishments of our personnel.

Client

The client was a global logistics company with over 500,000 employees.

Role

Our Principal was engaged as the project lead.

Client Challenges

The Client had grown through acquisition, and was still in the early stages of integration. In many aspects, the acquired entities in each country operated with some autonomy, each with their own IT support. Within each European country, there would be as many as four different IT teams, supporting their own IT infrastructures.

As a result, the client had as many as four legacy Active Directory domains in each of dozens of European countries. Having several dozens of separate, untrusted domains created financial and operational challenges, including:

- Excessive administrative and support costs relating to the redundant infrastructure. Each domain was managed and supported by a different team, using different administrative standards – when any standards existed at all; and
- The users in these disparate, untrusted domains were unable to access many enterprise applications and resources. This hindered several key strategic initiatives for the enterprise.

Project Scope

- The project team was engaged to develop tools and repeatable processes for consolidating the many domains to the newly established central corporate directory.
- For this first consolidation project, domain migration and consolidation was scoped for the UK, France, and the corporate centers in Belgium.

Approach

The initial priority was stakeholder identification and communication. They spanned the many IT and business units across the three countries as well as the regional IT division. Input from the AD service owners and architects had to be considered, and planning had to be coordinated with the efforts of other ongoing programs.

The project team developed discovery materials and worked with the in-country IT departments to document the environment and develop an overall migration plan. Meanwhile, the team engaged architects to design an innovative new directory consolidation tool, using an off-the-shelf metadirectory tool to programmatically match duplicate accounts and perform account cleanup.

The project team then proceeded to work with the in-country IT teams and the corporate directory service owners to setup the requisite trusts, perform pilots, and migrate objects.

New Standards

Along with the enterprise AD, all standards relating to this directory had to be implemented as well in the scoped countries. This included:

- A new naming standard for all users, groups, and computers
- Consolidating the support and provisioning processes for Active Directory
- Implementing a new delegation model

Key Project Challenges

- Following this program, much of the in-country IT support would be consolidated and centralized. With these changes on the horizon, the in-country IT support teams struggled with each other and with regional IT for dominance and protecting their knowledge silos.
- Stakeholder buy-in was a major challenge for this project. The regional IT division sponsored the project. However, discovery and execution relied heavily on knowledge and resources from in-country IT departments, which were not obligated to follow the lead of the regional IT division.
 - Progress was only possible with delicate and attentive stakeholder management and negotiation.
 - Issues had to be carefully communicated and addressed during the entire project. This included disagreements ranging from the corporate naming standard to funding and resource allocation.
- Although consultant services and software were funded by the enterprise IT department, corporate procurement policies required that all hardware be funded and procured by the local in-country IT groups, who were not in favor of this project to begin with.
- This project also relied very heavily on in-country IT resources, which had to be funded by the country IT teams. While a healthy Active Directory is critical for many business services and applications, getting the business to provide funding for an obscure, seemingly invisible part of the infrastructure was a great challenge.
- This AD consolidation was going on at the same time as a regional MPLS network upgrade. The team had to work with the MPLS program to avoid scheduling conflicts. The team also had to design the AD solution to meet the current and future (post-MPLS) needs of the countries in scope.

Project Result

- The project team developed a powerful migration toolset and program structure. These tools and processes were not only used to complete the scoped AD migrations, but were leveraged over the next 3 years to migrate and consolidate most of the rest of Europe in follow-on phases of the project.
- As a result of consolidating the European AD infrastructure, support and administrative overhead was greatly reduced. The standardized infrastructure allowed for the implementation of key business systems, allowing the Client to proceed with several strategic business initiatives.