Why make things complicated when they can be so simple?
DRK-Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein relies on Cisco Meraki

The DRK-Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein (Regional German Red Cross Association of Schleswig-Holstein), based in Kiel, is part of the international Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Together with 18 other regional German Red Cross associations and the Verband der Schwesternschaften (Nurses' Associations), it is a member of the German Red Cross, the national Red Cross association of the Federal Republic of Germany. The Landesverband is tasked with promoting cooperation between its member associations through centralised measures and standardised regulations. Furthermore, it manages health institutions belonging to the association, such as hospitals, care facilities and nursing schools.

With the desire to introduce a comprehensive, sustainable and powerful Wi-Fi infrastructure, the DRK-Landesverband turned to NetUSE AG, one of the largest and most successful IT systems houses in Northern Germany, and a long-time partner of Westcon-Comstor.

The challenge

The hospitals and care facilities were looking for a quick-to-implement solution for mobile visits, with many new Wi-Fi-compatible medical devices needing to be integrated into the network. But until now, there had been no comprehensive Wi-Fi structure in the institutions.

Both in the hospitals and care facilities, as well as the nursing schools, only isolated solutions had been present. The key requirements for the new Wi-Fi infrastructure were therefore the integration of all sites and the ability for individual sites to be managed centrally from the IT department of the DRK-Landesverband in future. Even in the event of a data cable failure, the Wi-Fi needed to remain functional

with the continued possibility of centralised administration. The scalability and expansion capability of the network also played a major role: new components needed to be easily integrated without the entire layout needing to be reset.

The solution

After an in-depth consultation by NetUSE AG, the Landesverband decided to commission Cisco Meraki with a network solution that could be completely managed via the cloud. This enables the centralised management of Wi-Fi, switching, security, Wi-Fi optimisation and mobile device management over the internet.

"Right from the initial presentation of the new solution that NetUSE arranged together with colleagues from Cisco Meraki at our premises in Kiel, we were rather intrigued. The adjacent two-week test phase convinced us completely," said Martin Fuchs, IT Manager of the DRK-Landesverbandes Schleswig-Holstein.

"We were not only impressed by how easy the cloud solution is to manage, it is also very intuitive to operate. We knew that it would take our Wi-Fi structure to the next level."

When they decided to make the purchase, the Landesverband was among the early adopters of the innovative cloud solution. "We therefore all worked very closely together throughout the project's duration – we ourselves, the colleagues at Cisco Meraki and the IT department of the Landesverband," outlined Sascha Szkaradkiewicz, Head of Marketing at NetUSE AG, of the process. "In doing so, we ensured that we all shared our knowledge and were always up to date."

> **"**
>
> We were not only impressed by how easy the cloud solution is to manage. It is also very intuitive to operate. We knew that it would bring our Wi-Fi structure to the next level.
>
> **"**
>
> Martin Fuchs,
> IT Manager of the DRK-Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein

The IT department of the Landesverband itself was in charge of sizing and project planning, with the roll-out taking place with the support of NetUSE AG. Overall, the solution was gradually introduced at 11 locations.

"Due to the distributed structures, Westcon-Comstor highly appealed to the DRK-Landesverband by providing an on-call contingency whose conditions were valid for 12 months," said Sascha Szkaradkiewicz. "The trust and courtesy of our long-standing partner is something we highly value."

Outcome

After introducing the new solution in 11 locations, the DRK-Landesverband is satisfied: "With a centrally established controller solution, functionality – even if a data cable failed – would not have been guaranteed.

Today, our Wi-Fi environment can be configured offline and completely managed in a centralised manner, even if the hardware is not yet online," Martin Fuchs explained of the decision to work with Cisco Meraki. "If a new location is connected, we can already configure images in the dashboard before the access points and switches are physically delivered to the location. This greatly minimises the effort required and therefore reduces our costs. Furthermore, the unified firmware update process ensures that all the devices used are up to date, without individual components being 'forgotten' or 'lagging behind' on an update."

The effort also paid off with regard to the switching area. "Today, we have a homogeneous and structured environment at our disposal, which depicts all relevant network security functions and can be configured and managed in a centralised manner. Errors are quickly and reliably identified via the dashboard. Defective components can quickly be replaced: it is all so easy that we can explain the procedure and exchange process to those outside of the IT department. In-depth technical understanding is no longer a mandatory requirement for operation and management," sums up Martin Fuchs.

In future, the Landesverband is planning to introduce SD-WAN to be able to create redundancies. The long-term goal is therefore to create a unified network with seamless Wi-Fi coverage that is also available at the external locations at any time.

Partner:
NetUSE AG

Partner level:
Cisco Premier Partner

Products used:
218 access points
80 switches

NetUSE AG