

Case study

SGL Group uses Windows 7 to homogenise its software landscape



With HP Managed PC Deployment Services, SGL receives laptops and desktops preconfigured with standardised applications

Industry

Manufacturing

Objective

Converting the operating system landscape to Windows 7 before support for Windows XP expired, whilst also reducing the number of different applications in use

Approach

Following a tender process for the migration project, SGL Carbon narrowed its selection to four providers. HP's suggested solution left the most professional impression on the company's decision makers

IT matters

- Simple administration of desktops and laptops with a standardised application environment and pre-configuration at HP Staging Centers
- Smooth, automated installation of location specific software by precisely evaluating each site's needs and developing corresponding packages
- Proven HP Managed PC Deployment Services methods reduce risk and ensure high levels of satisfaction amongst end users
- Needs-based training provided on-site and online by the HP training team

Business matters

- As a global company, HP is able to offer its services wherever they are needed
- Homogenised application landscape allows SGL Carbon to introduce a cost centre structure
- Number of software programs requiring support has been reduced from 2,750 to 700
- SGL's IT team can now concentrate on more important core functions
- Users always feel well looked after with flexible HP Support



“We had just 4 months to roll out the new systems to our 40 locations worldwide. I was very impressed with how HP was able to deal with this extreme pressure and still act effectively and efficiently. We really appreciated HP’s professionalism during both the tender period and the project itself.”

– Thomas Mezger, head of technical service, IT services, SGL Carbon SE

Well positioned for future challenges with a modern, homogenous system landscape

In June 2013, SGL Carbon found itself with just nine months to upgrade its 4,000 desktop computers and laptops worldwide to Windows 7®. Without professional external help, this would have been an impossible task. HP replaced all of the company's computers with its latest Windows 7 EliteBooks and EliteDesks, homogenised its applications and provided training for end users. SGL Carbon is now well positioned to face the challenges of the future.





Challenge

An ageing operating system with far too many different applications

SGL Carbon is one of the world's leading producers of carbon, graphite and carbon fibre products with a global distribution network and modern production facilities across Europe, North America and Asia. Twenty-three of its 42 production sites are in Europe with a further 11 in North America and eight in Asia. It also operates a service network in over 100 countries around the world. Its subsidiaries handle a wide range of different tasks and so require a huge variety of different applications covering everything from business software to graphics packages.

"We had a relatively homogenous operating system landscape with Windows XP, but our application landscape was the exact opposite," says Thomas Mezger, Head of Technical Service, IT Services at SGL Carbon, describing the situation as it was back in June 2013. Different parts of the company were using different software programs for the same tasks, and SGL was unsure whether all of these different applications would still run on Windows 7. The company therefore decided to take its company-wide conversion to the new operating system as an opportunity to homogenise its application landscape. This would also help to reduce costs going forwards.

The migration was becoming more and more urgent as Microsoft® was due to terminate support for Windows XP in April 2014. "We would have been able to carry out the migration ourselves, but not with such a tight deadline," says Mezger. So SGL decided to put the project out for tender. The company narrowed its selection down to four different providers, one of which was HP. In the eyes of the IT team, it was HP that made the most professional impression.

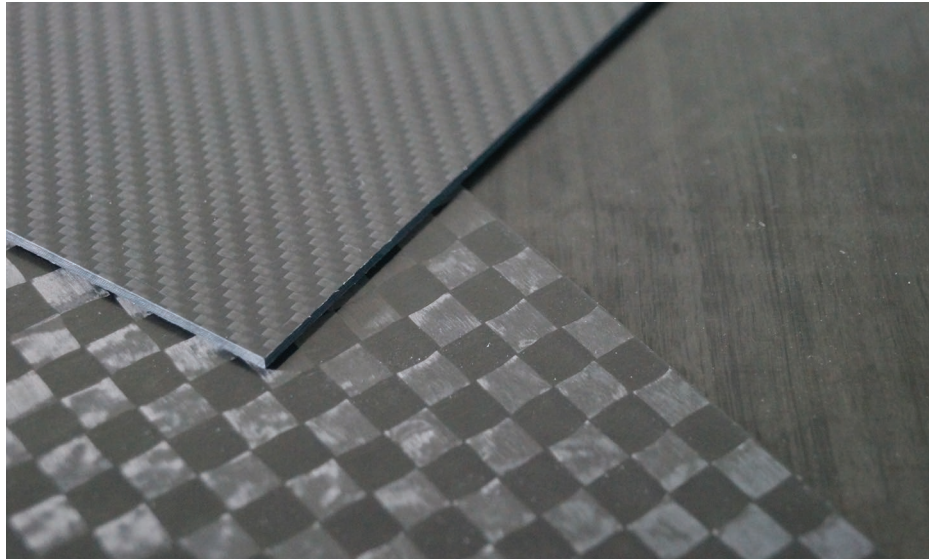
It became clear at the very start of the project that the SGL Group not only needed to migrate to a new operating system, it also needed to replace all of its 4,000 desktops and laptops worldwide with new, modern systems. As these are administered centrally, the company wanted to ensure that the same systems were installed at all of its sites. "The Group is organised into different competence centres around the world. This means that a computer in Europe may be administered by a team member in the USA. Having a standardised system landscape is therefore an enormous help to us," explains Mezger.

As SGL selected HP as its partner for the migration project, it was an easy choice to also source the new hardware from HP and to have the necessary software installed prior to delivery. However, before each employee received their new HP EliteBook or HP EliteDesktop, they had to be trained to use the new system. Compared with previous operating system updates, the jump from Windows XP to Windows 7 is particularly large. The schedule had to be arranged precisely to ensure that users received training both before the new, preconfigured hardware were delivered and when it arrived. SGL assigned this job to HP.

Solution

HP Managed PC Deployment Services provide a homogenised application landscape on modern Windows 7 devices

As the deadline was so tight – the first meeting took place in June 2013 – and the range of tasks so extensive, meticulous planning was absolutely essential to the project's success. "Our first step was to listen to SGL very closely and determine things such as periods when nothing could happen at certain sites – for example during Chinese New Year in China or periods during which the annual financial statements had to be produced," says Guido Stahlmecke.



He was HP's overall project manager and responsible for the hardware roll-out. Based on these findings, a detailed roll-out plan was developed.

As well as the planning and design of the tailor made solution, HP Managed PC Deployment Services also cover off-site hardware setup prior to delivery to the target location and on-site PC installation or software updates, including providing training for the user and the removal of their old PC. In order to ensure that communications with end users were always fully completed and that performance reports could be generated, the entire deployment process was managed using HP SCDM workflow software.

SGL decided to provide its employees with the HP EliteBook G820, G840 and G850 and the HP EliteDesk 800. Before they were delivered to the company's various sites around the globe, the devices were first sent to one of HP's two Staging Centers in Germany and the USA. There, a specially configured image containing the standard software used by every site – such as Office applications, security software and an identity management system – was installed on each device. "We can work very quickly and effectively at our Staging Centers. In some cases we were able to install the image on 100 of SGL's machines at a time," says Mario Drenker from HP Infrastructure Consulting Services.

Software solution design and testing

At the same time, HP had to ascertain which software was running on the 4,000 laptops and desktops it was replacing, and decide what the new software environment would look like.

"Together with the customer, we determined relatively quickly which software packages needed to be installed on which computers," says Drenker.

Then they had to figure out which programs were duplicated and tidy things up. "We originally had 2,750 different applications in use. Today it is just 700," says SGL's Head of IT, Mezger. HP also had its own tools for installing the software packages. "We would constantly keep track of which site would be next to receive its new hardware, and which software packages it would need," says Drenker. The software programs were then packaged together in the HP Software Factories so that they could be installed at the sites automatically without any interaction from the user. "For us, the biggest challenge was ensuring constant communication and interaction with the end users. But it went very smoothly and we worked really well as a team," sums up Drenker.

Windows 7 training

Mezger too highlights the excellent cooperation between the companies: "Our users never felt like they were being left in the dark." This was particularly true of the training part of the project. The training concept included a number of different components ranging from web based training and sessions in traditional or virtual classrooms to "floor walking" where a trainer visits the user at their workstation. Users can continue to use the modular web based training course for reference after the migration.

The training plan was based around the roll-out plan to ensure that, wherever possible, training would take place two weeks before the HP EliteBooks and EliteDesks were delivered. The HP team was also responsible for managing the invitations to the virtual training sessions. However, despite all of the companies' meticulous planning, the project did require a degree of flexibility.

Customer solution at a glance

Hardware

- HP EliteBook 820 G1
- HP EliteBook 840 G1
- HP EliteBook 850 G1
- 800 EliteDesktop USDT (desk version)
- 800 EliteDesktop TWR (tower version)

HP services

- Consulting and training
- HP Managed PC Deployment Services

“We always needed extra, spontaneous training sessions, for example in cases where the virtual training courses were not sufficient for the users’ needs,” says Karsten Garn, who was responsible for the training roll-out at HP. HP provided a total of 49 virtual training sessions, 10 days of classroom training and 42 days of floor walking for SGL over the course of a year.

The Limburg subsidiary was the first location to receive its new Windows 7 devices in October 2013, with a second pilot site in Bonn following shortly afterwards. The roll-out continued at the company’s five American sites in November. Tokyo was the last to receive its devices in April 2014.

Benefits

Well prepared for future challenges, and now with lower costs

Hundreds of rarely used applications have now disappeared from SGL’s computers altogether and no longer require administration. Instead, the company now benefits from a standardised application landscape with location or role specific programs.

Before the Windows 7 migration, it had not been possible for the company to implement a universal cost centre structure for its IT systems as the applications across the different subsidiaries were so vastly different. The project with HP – particularly the strict homogenisation of the applications – has made this reorganisation possible.

This will not only reduce costs, but will also enable the customer to approach its next steps in a more structured way. “With this migration project, we have taken the opportunity to create a much more solid foundation for our future development,” says Thomas Mezger, who now feels well prepared for future operating system updates. HP’s international team, suggested solutions and services all impressed Mezger greatly. “Despite the enormous time pressures and plethora of different applications, HP worked with absolute precision and brought us into the new Windows world right on schedule.”

Markus Zerbach, the overall project manager for the global Windows 7 deployment and roll-out continues: “This change project is the largest one we have ever carried out in our IT department. We are very satisfied with the services and products we received from HP and have already decided to work with them again to develop a strategy to convert to Windows 10.”

Learn more at
hp.com/go/windows7

Sign up for updates
hp.com/go/getupdated



Share with colleagues



Rate this document

© Copyright 2015 Hewlett-Packard Development Company, L.P. The information contained herein is subject to change without notice. The only warranties for HP products and services are set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying such products and services. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty. HP shall not be liable for technical or editorial errors or omissions contained herein.

Microsoft and Windows 7 ® are U.S. registered trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies.

4AA6-1700EEW, October 2015

