



Spikes supports migration of 18 Lotus Bakeries branches to Exchange and Lync online



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*Monique Huijsmans, Project Manager,
Lotus Bakeries*

Lotus Bakeries is a family-owned and operated company that produces authentic biscuit and cake specialities: speculoos (a type of spiced, short-crust biscuit), gingerbread, waffles, cakes, etc. The company certainly keeps its end up on the international stage: Lotus Bakeries has 11 production sites in Belgium, France, the Netherlands, France and Sweden. In addition, there are sales offices in 10 European countries, the US, Hong Kong, China and Chile, as well as an export department for other countries. The existing systems could no longer provide the desired functionalities for communication and knowledge sharing properly. Lotus Bakeries consequently decided to streamline its communication and document management with an integrated IT platform.

Because of strong growth and various takeovers, Lotus Bakeries considers a central IT platform to be of paramount importance for its strategy. Local initiatives and workarounds to solve specific problems concerning communication and process-related knowledge sharing have arisen nonetheless. Efficient communication and knowledge sharing among the 18 branches is becoming increasingly more important nowadays.

An assessment study showed that the organisation needed an integrated, future-oriented and flexible IT platform for communication and knowledge sharing.

Overview

Country: Belgium, the Netherlands,
France...
Sector: Food

Profile

Lotus Bakeries, an internationally oriented family owned and operated company, produces biscuit and cake specialties: speculoos (a type of spiced, short-crust biscuit), gingerbread, waffles, cakes, etc.

Challenge

The desired functionalities for communication and knowledge sharing could no longer be carried out in an adequate and flexible manner.

Solution

Lotus Bakeries opted for Microsoft as an integrated platform. The first phase, i.e. the worldwide rollout of Exchange Online and Lync Online, was carried out successfully.

Advantages

- Scalability and integration of Microsoft platform
- Anyplace, anytime communication with Exchange Online and Lync Online
- Gradual reduction of e-mail traffic
- Attention to user adoption and business approach by Spikes

More information about Lotus Bakeries?

www.lotusbakeries.be

More information about the products and services of Spikes?

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Taking the plunge with Microsoft and Spikes

A set of specifications was drawn up under the auspices of Monique Huijsmans, Project Manager at Lotus Bakeries. An initial selection process resulted in three potential suppliers.

The choice ultimately fell on Microsoft and Spikes as a specialised Microsoft partner: "It was not merely the integrated and future-oriented Microsoft platform that appealed to us. The approach proposed by Spikes also suited us. For us, this was first and foremost a business project, not a technology project, and Spikes was fully in line with us on that score," Monique Huijsmans says.

Phased approach

Lotus Bakeries decided to divide the ambitious project in three phases. An initial phase – the communication part – comprised the migration from Lotus Notes to Microsoft Exchange and Lync.

In the second phase, which is fully under way, SharePoint was introduced as an integrated system for document management and knowledge sharing. The third phase is expected to entail an extension to more advanced features such as management dashboards with KPIs, an extranet for customers, and a self-service platform for employees.

Migration to cloud-based communication infrastructure

The first phase has now been completed successfully. 610 users in 18 branches have migrated to a 100% cloud environment with Exchange Online and Lync Online. A very big step forward for users at Lotus Bakeries: "Every employee used to need a token to gain access to the network and his or her e-mails. By migrating to a cloud environment, s/he can henceforth consult his or her messages anyplace, anytime and via any device."

Monique Huijsmans: "As an online messaging platform, Lync requires some getting used to on the part of users at the outset, but we now see that they are becoming increasingly more familiar with the new features such as chat functions and screen sharing."

User adoption crucial

The input from users proved crucial for the choices that Lotus Bakeries made, and the success of the project with a rollout in no fewer than 18 branches is largely due to the attention paid to user adoption, according to Monique Huijsmans. The project team launched several actions to that end, such as designating key users in each branch, organising demo sessions together with Spikes, creating flyers and Wikis, etc.

Towards a central Employee Portal

After a successful first phase, an Employee Portal based on Microsoft SharePoint is now in the cards. Unlike the communication component which is entirely cloud-based, Lotus Bakeries opted, together with Spikes, for a hybrid environment with an on-premise implementation of SharePoint.

"SharePoint will be deployed at Lotus Bakeries in an initial phase to make controlled documents of the HR, Marketing and Quality Control departments available online for all employees. We expect that the Employee Portal will gradually help reduce mail traffic particularly as regards content distribution," Monique Huijsmans adds.

Spikes: open and professional organisation

Monique Huijsmans is delighted with the smooth cooperation with Spikes: "Short communication lines, an open and horizontal organisation, and employees who are always prepared to help think along and to support new initiatives."



Monique Huijsmans, Project Manager,
Lotus Bakeries