



One alarm system for many kinds of alarm

Case study: KSD Schaffhausen data centres

The company operates around 700 servers plus peripheral systems, housed in two KSD data centres. This hardware is deployed to support and maintain the functionality of client IT end devices at around 2,200 locations. Such capacity makes KSD the canton's leading IT service provider.



«With this platform, we have achieved our primary goal of standardising and simplifying our technical processes.»

Michael Bachmann, IT project manager at KSD

And because these data centres manage lots of personal information and other kinds of sensitive data, secure data protection is absolutely critical, as is the need for a continuously available IT infrastructure.

Target: Merge several kinds of alert into one system

KSD alarm systems are thus both comprehensive and sophisticated in scope. Michael Bachmann, IT project manager responsible for infrastructure and information security, describes some of the features: «The server systems and peripherals such as air conditioning and emergency power circuits are continuously monitored and, if an irregularity should occur, an alert is sent to a backup

system. When a fire alarm is triggered, or if there should be an attempted break-in, the fire brigade or police are alerted immediately. And there is also a dead man's alarm to protect lone workers.»

KSD's stated goal was that these various alarm systems should be merged to form one single platform. The company approached Swissphone AG with this request, and a workshop was arranged to jointly define the present status and the desired target status of the KSD facility. Michael Bachmann: «All system alerts should be centrally executed via a pager,

which was found to be the best solution for this target requirement.»

About KSD Schaffhausen

KSD is an IT service provider with around 50 employees meeting the needs of discerning clients. Founded in 1972, KSD is an IT company based in the canton capital city of Schaffhausen, which manages IT infrastructure on behalf of public authority groups such as schools, hospitals and the police, as well as for private companies.

From the server to the cloud

The Swissphone IMASYS® Alert platform is ideal for such tasks. This is a cloud-based service which can gather alarm messages of various kinds, then process and forward them to appropriate predefined recipients. The connection from the user's LAN system to the IMASYS platform is handled by a dedicated central alarm server which receives messages via TCP/IP and sends them to the cloud service. This infrastructure bundles various types of alarms and is very flexible because it can be fully configured and adapted to meet user requirements – even during real-time operation.

Step-by-step implementation

KSD opted for this solution and the company is now well on its way to implementing system components step by step. Michael Bachmann reports: «Among other things, we have already integrated our burglary and fire alarm systems within the IMASYS platform. Alarm messages are sent direct to the police or the fire brigade, while the responsible persons at KSD are informed simultaneously.»

An emergency service with a different mode of operation runs on the same platform: «Our clients report critical faults by telephone to our hotline voicemail facility. IMASYS generates a fault message from this information, which is automatically forwarded (via pager) to the on-call service, which then acknowledges receipt of the message.» Swissphone has developed the voicemail facility specifically for this application – a solution which, from KSD's perspective, is as easy as it is reliable – especially as no administrative effort is required for addressing the alarms: the employee from the on-call service carries one of the two pagers. If he does not respond to high-priority alarms, IMASYS will then escalate the situation.

Dead man's alarm for lone workers

A third kind of alarm is the dead man's alarm, for those occasions at night or over weekends when there is a lone worker looking after the data centre servers. IMASYS Alert utilises Swissphone's SOS portal to initiate appropriate measures for this alarm feature in the event of an emergency.

The fourth group of alerts protects the infrastructure itself – for example, the air conditioning system and the data centre's emergency power supply system. These are managed by an external service provider and thus are not currently part of the centralised alarm system. And the fifth group consists of the server systems which represent the core IT infrastructure. The integration of these last two alarm systems is imminent.

A «one for all» approach reduces the administrative burden

The individual alarm systems, which had previously functioned autonomously, will each be gradually transferred to the IMASYS platform. And once the final systems are all in place and configured, the old systems can then be switched off.

This will not only reduce the number of systems, but also ease the burden of managing multiple alarms. Michael Bachmann comments: «Moving to the platform, we have standardised the technical processes and at the same time simplified them – which was our principal goal.»

This won't limit the variety of different alarms which can be used. For example, the type of alarm (via SMS, e-mail or voice message) and the communication channel (smartphone, pager,...) can be individually configured for each alarm. RES.Q hybrid devices are used as pagers, and because these are fitted with a SIM card, they can also be used in foreign countries.

Autonomous adjustment of individual alarms

For KSD managers, the flexibility of the new alarm system is another significant advantage, as well as the unified platform. And because this is a cloud solution, the current version is always available, which means that comprehensive configuration of individual requirements can be achieved with minimal effort. This applies to both new alarm events and to new alarm receivers. And the availability of alerting is also guaranteed at every level: All Swissphone cloud and messaging services have inbuilt redundancy. So KSD now have an alarm solution which features a simple design, yet also offers high-level security coupled with a high degree of flexibility.

Components of the Swissphone solution

Hardware

- s.QUAD X15, RES.Q and SOS-Button
- s.GUARD alarm server
- I/O IP modul

Software

- SOS-Portal
- IMASYS Alert
- Voice Box notification