

»»» Perfect Chemistry



Merck KGaA in Darmstadt, Germany, is an international company operating in the pharmaceuticals, chemistry, and laboratory distribution markets. It employs more than 34,000 people in 55 countries. Total sales in 2000 amounted to 7.5 billion Euros.

Sustained growth in all of Merck's core businesses has led to an increase in the number of PCs used throughout the company. LANDesk® Management Suite has helped to improve service levels and reduce support costs for around 12,000 PCs in Darmstadt and other European sites.

Managing network growth

By 1997, the number of PCs at Merck's headquarters had risen to 4,000, and the network was becoming unmanageable. The size of the plant made it increasingly difficult to provide the necessary levels of support, as the engineers often had to walk long distances to solve users' problems. Inventory management was also very time consuming, with the helpdesk team manually updating all hardware and software records.

"We urgently needed a system that would automate many of the helpdesk processes and improve our engineers' productivity," explains Johannes John, Systems Consultant in Merck KGaA at Darmstadt.

Best value

The company's systems specialists were asked to review four leading network management solutions and, after careful analysis, they chose LANDesk Management Suite. "In our opinion LANDesk Management Suite was – and still is – the best all-round product of its kind, with the richest set of features," Johannes John confirms. "It also offered the best value in terms of total cost of ownership."

There are now nearly 6,000 workstations on the Darmstadt network, and Merck's support engineers have remote access to all of them through LANDesk Management Suite. When an employee calls the helpdesk, the support team can see that person's computer screen, run trouble-shooting programs, and take control of the PC if necessary. The majority of problems are now identified and solved remotely without an engineer needing to visit the user's office.

Business Needs

- More efficient support for large, distributed networks
- More effective inventory management
- Faster distribution of software applications and updates

Solution

- LANDesk® Management Suite

Business Benefits

- Improved helpdesk productivity
- Automation of routine tasks leading to more rapid resolution of problems
- Reduced cost of support for 12,000 PC users

Huge time savings

Automated inventory management has also played its part in significantly improving the helpdesk's efficiency. Manual records are a thing of the past; LANDesk Management Suite now records all new hardware or software installations and transmits the details to a central database.

An additional advantage is that the inventory remains permanently up-to-date, as Johannes John explains: "Thanks to the LANDesk Software solution, new hardware or software details are entered on to the system without delay. We find this an enormous benefit when solving problems remotely. The support team can not only view users' PC screens, but also check the current configuration of each computer. This makes it easier to identify the cause of the problem – whether it's a newly installed component or a recent software upgrade, for example. We're saving a great deal of time as a result of this capability."

International support

After using LANDesk Management Suite for over four years, the helpdesk team at Merck continues to be completely satisfied with its performance. Johannes John again: "We are introducing the LANDesk Software solution at more and more international locations. Wherever network managers decide that they need a client management technology – most recently in the UK and France – we implement LANDesk® Management Suite. We have standardised on this solution throughout the company."

Approximately 12,000 users are now being supported by LANDesk Management Suite at different Merck locations in Europe – a number that will continue to grow. Meanwhile, key benefits afforded by the LANDesk Software solution are improved helpdesk efficiency and reduced desktop support costs.

"Time savings are enormous because we no longer have to walk a mile or more to get to a user's office," says Johannes John. "Our engineers can also solve problems more quickly than before because the information they need is instantly available."

Ideal enterprise solution

Merck is now planning to implement the 'push' options of LANDesk Management Suite to automate and streamline the distribution of software. Whereas currently the users themselves activate software updates for their workstations ('pull'), in the future the support team will be able to instigate global upgrades across the company's networks.

Johannes John concludes: "We have found that LANDesk Management Suite contains all the necessary functionality for managing large, distributed networks. It is saving us huge amounts of time and money and enabling us to provide faster, more effective support to 12,000 users around Europe."

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