BLUECAT™

IP Address Management, DNS and DHCP Solutions

German Grocery Giant, Edeka SouthWest, Deployed a Centralized, Automated BlueCat IPAM System

ORGANIZATION
Edeka SouthWest

INDUSTRY
Retail

PRODUCTS
BlueCat IPAM
BlueCat DNS/DHCP Core Services

RESULTS
Centralized, automated IPM solution

Flexible architecture to meet unique needs

High availability and reliability

THE CUSTOMER

Founded in Offenburg, Germany in 1927 and originally called "The Grocery Purchasing Cooperative," Edeka SouthWest is one of the largest food producers, distributors, and retailers in Germany. The company has operations in Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Saarland, as well as parts of Hessen and Bavaria. Following very strict quality controls, Edeka SouthWest produces meat, baked goods, wine, and mineral water. The company distributes its products in 1,350 stores, including small, independent retailers and very large supermarkets, as well as numerous distribution channels. Edeka SouthWest also operates five warehouses in Offenburg, Ellhofen, Balingen, Heddesheim, and St. Ingbert Edeka. The company is one of the largest employers and trainers in the region with 43,500 employees and 3,000 trainees across 29 locations. According to 2015 financials, Edeka SouthWest generated sales of $8.7 Billion.

THE CHALLENGE

As technology has permeated every facet of business, company networks have grown exponentially. Typically, the growth has overshadowed the underlying infrastructure and processes. Such was the case with Edeka SouthWest. In recent years, its IT department deployed many devices on the company's network to keep pace with its expanding ERP system. Each device needed its own IP address. Since the IT team managed IP addresses manually with spreadsheets, the group struggled to keep track of IP data.

Like most large organizations, Edeka SouthWest relied heavily on its mission-critical technologies, such as its ERP solution. Any downtime could mean lost customers and revenue. Therefore, the spotlight was squarely focused on the IT department and service desk to ensure that its network always functioned at peak performance, IP address data was always accurate and valid, and systems were always available. To ease the strain of network growth, automate management processes, and consolidate IP address data, Edeka SouthWest's IT team decided to look for a DDI vendor.

Since the company's affiliate, Edeka Nordbayern, had recently worked with a DDI consultant, N3K Network Systems, and BlueCat to successfully implement Linux-based DNS/DHCP servers, the IT department added the vendors to its short list. Edeka SouthWest also considered a competitor appliance vendor.

After extensive tests, the company determined that the competitor solution did not meet its needs for a flexible, open architecture and rapid implementation process. According to the Edeka SouthWest Project Manager, Daniel Borrmann, "The decision was clearly in favor of BlueCat. It is simply a well-engineered, technically advanced product. We also liked the intuitive user interface, which would reduce our training needs." The company also selected N3K as its implementation partner because of its vast experience and recent success with the Edeka Nordbayern project.

THE SOLUTION

With extensive guidance and technical advice from N3K, Edeka SouthWest deployed the new BlueCat IPAM solution in three phases. Phase one was a pilot project in one location. After a successful installation and testing period at the trial location, the company progressed to phase two where Edeka SouthWest deployed the solution at its manufacturing facilities and subsidiaries. In phase three, the IPAM solution was deployed in Edeka SouthWest's retail locations.

When the project began, the company installed two BlueCat Address Manager servers. By the time the project was complete, Edeka SouthWest decided to upgrade each device to the latest models to take advantage of more robust capabilities. The company also deployed integrated Wi-Fi and VoIP that is compatible with Microsoft and, the DNS was fully integrated with Active Directory.

The BlueCat DNS/DHCP solution consisted of 30 different types of equipment and 70 appliances deployed across several company locations, with one or two devices at each manufacturing and distribution location for direct failover.

Because Edeka SouthWest runs a 24-hour operation, N3K and BlueCat had to design the network solution to ensure high availability. In addition, the vendor partner needed to make sure that the new standardized network environment was still flexible enough to meet the complex, unique needs of each Edeka SouthWest office location, retailer, and affiliate.

To help facilitate a successful implementation, N3K conducted extensive training sessions with Edeka SouthWest's IT department. The training covered both theoretical foundations and practical application exercises so that the IT team could successfully manage the new centralized DDI environment. Edeka SouthWest eventually took over the training sessions to ensure that its entire IT team was well educated on the BlueCat solution.

"The BlueCat Address Manager solution is a centralized system that provides all departments real time documentation and support information. Due to their accessibility, high quality, durability, scalability, and ability to manage DNS and DHCP, BlueCat appliances are extremely attractive to us."

– Daniel Borrmann
Head of Network & Communication
Business IT Services
Edeka SouthWest

VALUE/RESULTS

Now Edeka SouthWest has an automated, centrally managed IPAM system with accurate data at all times. The company's Logistics and Retail team, within the IT department, provide address management support for both employees and wholesale/retail customers.

The company is very happy with its BlueCat solution, especially since upgrades have been issue-free because BlueCat's hardware and software are always compatible. Edeka SouthWest plans to continue its relationship with BlueCat by adding devices as needed to support expansion and growth. Borrmann says, "It is also very important that we are equipped with BlueCat products for IPv6. We are planning a conversion in the near future."

The company attributes the success of the project to the flexibility, scalability, and usability of the BlueCat solution as well as open communications and prompt service from both N3K and BlueCat.