

Retailer Improves Customer Satisfaction with Integrated Services

Customer Case Study



SPAR Austria cuts incident response times, saves 2.5 man-hours per day after deploying Cisco ServiceGrid.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: SPAR Austria

Industry: Retail

Location: Salzburg, Austria

Number of Employees: More than 38,000

Challenge:

- Automate incident management processes
- Swiftly and easily integrate new service partners
- Efficiently manage vendors and providers

Solution:

- Cisco ServiceGrid centralizes management of business partners, service-related systems
- Cohesive processes, automated service delivery make SPAR/provider help desks more efficient
- Continuous, transparent, accelerated service processes ease collaboration between SPAR, partners

Results:

- Increased customer satisfaction, reduced point-of-sale equipment downtime via faster incident response and query resolution
- Achieved time savings across a 10-year span of 2.5 hours per day for SPAR store managers
- Facilitated centralized, cloud-based inventory for 40,000-device network

Challenge

In 2010, retailer SPAR held a 29.2 percent share of the Austrian grocery market, achieved revenues in excess of 5 billion Euros, and demonstrated the highest market share growth (at 4.5 percent) of all food retailers in Austria, according to ACNielsen. One way SPAR has achieved this success is by providing highly efficient IT support for its stores, understanding that impeccable customer service depends on devices being constantly up and running.

Having equipment work properly, including point of sale (POS) printers, electronic scales, and Information Communication Technology (ICT), is key to customer satisfaction in the highly competitive food trade. When incidents do occur, they must be resolved quickly. This goal becomes challenging, however, when myriad service providers support an array of devices.

For example, if a single scale malfunctions in a store, impatient customers abandon shopping carts with perishable goods. Customers may even leave the store, deciding to purchase their groceries elsewhere. Such incidents result in not just lost revenue but also lost customers. They also create stressful situations for store personnel. Typically, the store manager must be called in to clarify service-level agreements (SLAs) and determine which service provider and technician is responsible and available. Without automation, the store manager would need to contact the technician, provide the device data, schedule a repair appointment, and ensure that the technician arrives.

Solution

SPAR turned to Cisco ServiceGrid™ to resolve this problem, employing it as the central platform for managing all business partners and service-related systems to ensure continuous, transparent, and accelerated service processes in all SPAR stores. Service management information is automatically exchanged between SPAR's help desk and those of its IT service providers.



“When it comes to achieving outstanding customer service via fast incident resolution, Cisco ServiceGrid has been indispensable for SPAR.”

Roland Hahn
Head of IT Service
SPAR St. Pölten, Austria

Cisco® ServiceGrid optimizes and automates the collaboration and interaction between SPAR service employees and external partners. In the process, it reduces costs, eliminates errors, and improves the quality of support. Efficient automated transactions replace tedious manual operations, and incidents are processed and solved quickly and efficiently.

SPAR uses the solution to integrate various service providers, enter support requests via the web interface, and automatically route requests to the right technicians. It also takes advantage of central reporting to closely monitor end-to-end delivery processes to ensure compliance with multiple SLAs. SPAR coordinates the collaboration with service providers such as Wincor Nixdorf, Telekom Austria, s&t, Mettler Toledo, Bizerba, and Gunnebo, which provide the technical support for the devices in the stores and offices.

“If the credit card reader at the cash register malfunctions, it can be a critical situation, especially on a Saturday when the stores are crowded,” says Roland Hahn, head of IT service for SPAR St. Pölten, Austria. “With Cisco ServiceGrid, a ticket can be created quickly and then automatically forwarded, with the necessary priority, to the right service provider, requiring no additional effort from the store manager.”

Results

Today, SPAR is using the Cisco solution to manage nearly 1300 SPAR stores and offices, and the savings have been impressive. In one year, approximately 3900 tickets were processed via Cisco ServiceGrid to resolve a host of technology issues. Hahn says, “If a store manager is able to save 10 minutes on every help desk ticket because it doesn’t take multiple calls to reach the right service technician and the repair process does not need to be tracked, we save 80 working days per year.”

SPAR uses Cisco ServiceGrid not just for effective service provider management, but also for internal communications between IT departments in the company’s Salzburg headquarters and six regional offices. Another major benefit, according to Hahn, is SPAR’s centralized inventory of approximately 40,000 active devices, which is now actively managed in the cloud with ServiceGrid. This capability allows SPAR to monitor the devices and parts in real time, and determine whether replacement products are in stock or need to be ordered.

SPAR employs the Cisco solution to proactively manage devices, avoiding downtime from equipment failure and monitoring equipment quality to determine future technology investments. As a result, both IT and management have a better understanding of the quality of the device groups and what to forecast for replacements.

Over the more than 10 years that SPAR has relied on Cisco ServiceGrid to manage IT equipment, POS printers, POS cash registers, electronic scales, telephony equipment, and electronic payment systems, the retailer has seen a significant increase in customer satisfaction. The solution has also demonstrated remarkable proof points such as allowing the company to inventory 40,775 IT devices and process 71,766 help desk tickets since 2000. More impressive are the time savings SPAR’s store managers have been able to incur since deploying Cisco ServiceGrid: 2.5 hours per day, 7475 days, 267 months, and 22.25 years.

Next Steps

Hahn expects SPAR to continue to benefit from Cisco ServiceGrid for a long time. “Efficient procedures contribute a significant part to our above-average growth and are an essential part of our corporate philosophy,” he says. “In the future, we want to get more independent SPAR merchants on board for further efficiency gains. When it comes to achieving outstanding customer service via fast incident resolution, Cisco ServiceGrid has been indispensable for SPAR.”

For More Information

- To find out more about Cisco ServiceGrid, go to: www.cisco.com/go/services.

Services List

- Cisco ServiceGrid



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