

# Fuchs & Associés Finance Luxembourg (FAFL)

## Wireless Aironet connections for shared data and telephone network between offices



"WE WILL RECOUP THE INVESTMENT IN MAYBE THREE YEARS, FIVE AT THE MOST. IT'S TRUE, SAVING WASN'T OUR MAIN AIM BUT THIS RETURN ON INVESTMENT IS A WELCOME BONUS."

Claude Birnbaum, operations manager at Fuchs & Associés Finance Luxembourg

Fuchs & Associés Finance Luxembourg (FAFL) is a financial services provider specialising in capital management. The company was founded in May 2000 and focuses mainly on private investors, medium-sized enterprises and institutional investors. In just two years this dynamic SME has grown from three to 23 staff members.

Its rapid evolution meant that FAFL had to provide more office space. After a while, the staff were spread out over three offices in two buildings on either side of an intersection. This physical separation prevented the telephone company from providing a direct connection between the telephone lines of the different offices. That was highly inefficient, not least because it meant that FAFL did not have a main phone number.

### Main phone number

"As a service provider we place great value on smooth communication, both internally and with the outside world. It is an essential requirement that we help our customers quickly and efficiently," according to Claude Birnbaum, operations manager at FAFL. "We especially needed one main number for our company. It seems obvious that reception should pick up any incoming calls to a direct line when there is no answer. But with the old system that was just not possible. The

phone on an unmanned desk would keep on ringing – forwarding the call was impossible. And unanswered phones do not fit in with the professional image that we want to convey."

So FAFL wanted a single network that would link all the telephones of the different offices. Initially the company thought about hiring leased lines from P&T Luxembourg, but that appeared to be an expensive business. "To include all our staff members in a single telephone

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Background

Fuchs & Associés Finance Luxembourg (FAFL) is a financial services provider specialising in capital management. Due to its rapid expansion, the company was forced to take up office space in different buildings. This physical separation meant that a standard connection between the telephone lines of the different offices was impossible.

#### Challenge

As a service provider FAFL places great value on smooth communication, both internally and with the outside world. The company wanted to rehaul its telephone system to improve productivity and the efficiency of its staff. In particular, FAFL strongly felt that one central access point was needed.

#### Solution

FAFL installed a wireless Cisco Aironet network between the two buildings and combined it with Cisco IP telephony. By opting for IP telephony, the company can use the same wireless computer network for conveying speech as well. Moreover, the new telephone system offers an intelligent unified messaging system.

#### Results

Communication with customers is even more professional than before: FAFL can always be contacted through one main telephone number, calls can be smoothly transferred to the right person and staff who are out of the office can still consult messages through their inbox. Moreover, IP telephones offer new functions that simplify work. In short, the future-oriented installation helps to convey a professional image and will be in service for a long time.

network we would have needed ten leased lines and a second PABX. The price of the leased lines would have been almost 30,000 euros annually, a substantial sum for an SME,” says Claude Birnbaum.

### **Future-oriented investment**

A much cheaper and moreover more future-oriented solution was to build a wireless Cisco network between the different buildings in combination with Cisco IP telephony. Thanks to IP telephony voice traffic can pass through the same computer network as the data traffic. This means you only need one network infrastructure. The computer network manager can also manage the telephony, independent of the telephone supplier. Telephony based on IP offers many new possibilities. After all, it is easy to integrate telephone functions with other software applications.

“Such a forward-looking system fits in much better with the enterprising attitudes of FAFL,” believes Claude Birnbaum. “Our company is closely monitoring new developments, also in the field of communications technology. Later we would like to use more Internet applications and mobile applications to further improve productivity and convenience for our staff members. The new installation means we are completely ready for this. The investment will be recouped in maybe three years, five at most five. It’s true, saving wasn’t our main aim but this return on investment is a welcome bonus.”

“The system is indeed an advantageous investment because it can be used over a long period,” adds Phillippe Bermes of ComXperts, an integrator and Cisco partner. “The base stations with aerials, for example, are now installed as a bridge between the two buildings. But suppose that one day the company moves to just one site – then they can be used to set up a wireless network in the office. So it’s certainly not a wasted investment.”

### **Superfast implementation**

The project was custom-designed and executed in different stages by ComXperts, a system integrator that is part of the TreeTop group, FAFL’s usual ICT supplier. Moreover, the entire implementation took scarcely a month.

ComXperts installed equipment from the Cisco Aironet series for the wireless connection between the offices. In a first phase, a Cisco Aironet 340 Access Point was installed in both buildings. That gave FAFL a transfer speed of 11 Mbps (megabits per second) between the computer networks on either side of the street. To allow voice traffic to travel smoothly across the same network, the capacity was later increased to 33 Mbps. For this, each building was equipped with three Cisco Aironet 350 Access Points. The first connection through the Aironet 340 now serves as a backup and also quickly passes on stock market reports from the Reuters news service.

The previous computer network was partly renewed. The old hubs were not suitable for IP telephony because they did not support Quality of Service. Access to the backbone of the network now runs through Cisco 2620 routers. The connection with the Internet is via a Cisco 805 router, the connection with the public telephone network through a Cisco 3640. The switching within the local network happens through a Cisco Catalyst 2950 and with appliances from the Cisco Catalyst 3500 series.



### **User-friendly and well organised**

The CallManager, Cisco’s IP telephone exchange, serves all 33 Cisco 7960, 7940 and 7910 IP telephones in the three offices through the computer network. FAFL also makes use of Cisco Unity. Unity is Cisco’s unified messaging system that allows management of e-mail, voicemail and faxes through a single inbox from any appliance (IP telephone, mobile phone, PC) or location.

“The new installation allows us to communicate truly professionally with our clients. We can always be reached, customers are swiftly forwarded to the right telephone and Cisco Unity collects all messages in a well-organised way. IP telephony lightens the workload for our employees. Thanks to address books in the IP telephones you can, for example, find a name in double-quick time and call straightaway. Moreover, the wireless network is an affordable and practical solution for connecting different locations within a short range,” concludes Claude Birnbaum.



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