



Managed IT Services Provider Standardizes Its Cloud Services

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Stefan Bayer

Product Manager, Network Services, ScanPlus

ScanPlus

Industry

Managed IT services

Location

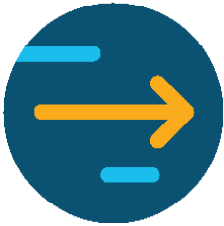
Ulm, Germany

Company Size

250 employees

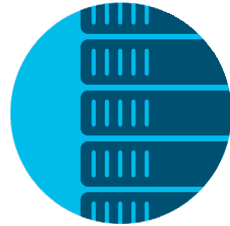
Website

www.scanplus.de



Challenges

- Create a standardized portfolio of cloud services
- Deliver those services from multiple data centers containing multiple hypervisors
- Facilitate self-service provisioning through network automation
- Protect customers through secure multi-tenancy



Solutions

- Application-centric, software-defined networking
- Centralized, automated infrastructure management



Results

- Accelerated network provisioning and client onboarding from hours to minutes
- Established full tenant segmentation and data protection within a shared cloud environment
- Improved service quality and standardization through network automation

“Standardization and automation lead to speed and quality. If you do it right the first time, it will always be right. With Cisco ACI, we can define once and automate many times.”

Stefan Daiber

Head of Architecture, ScanPlus

ScanPlus GmbH is a leading provider of managed cloud services in Europe. Delivered from multiple data centers in Germany, its carrier-grade cloud services meet the highest standards for application availability and security.

Challenge: Deliver cloud services at scale

ScanPlus’ biggest client is also its most important partner. As an exclusive cloud provider for Deutsche Telekom’s business customers, ScanPlus must deliver carrier-grade cloud services with rock-solid service level agreements (SLAs) to midsize companies throughout Europe.

“Deutsche Telekom is a very big international player,” says Stefan Bayer, network services product manager at ScanPlus, “and we needed to create a standardized portfolio of cloud services for our joint customers.”

Standardization makes cloud services easier to sell, deploy, and manage, he explains. But ScanPlus needed to extend across its data centers, and that couldn’t come at the expense of customization or self-service capabilities.

“We wanted to create a ‘cloud in a box,’ but with options, fully automated and delivered through a self-service portal,” Bayer says. “That’s not possible with legacy hardware.”

ScanPlus needed a new software-defined network (SDN) fabric, one that could:

- Deliver a unique combination of consistency and flexibility
- Make network provisioning and client onboarding faster
- Support the SLAs and security requirements of the business customers ScanPlus shares with Deutsche Telekom

The company chose the Cisco® Application Centric Infrastructure (Cisco ACI™) offering, an industry-leading SDN solution, to run in tandem with its Intel® Xeon® processor-based Cisco Unified Computing System™ servers.

“We were impressed from the very beginning with what we could achieve using Cisco ACI,” says Stefan Daiber, head of architecture at ScanPlus. “And it has continued to get better.”

Multiple data centers, multiple hypervisors

ScanPlus was an early adopter of Cisco ACI. The company initially selected the solution because of its ability to scale throughout a data center and overcome the limitations of traditional VLANs. The company didn’t know at the time, however, that the network fabric would soon be able to scale to multiple sites, with single-pane-of-glass management and automation also stretching across those sites.

Using Cisco ACI multisite functionality, ScanPlus is in the process of extending its network fabric to multiple data centers. Because the solution works with any vendor’s hypervisor, it can easily accommodate the differences of the systems in each location.

“The openness of Cisco ACI is a big benefit,” says Daiber. “It doesn’t just support any hypervisor, but also all of the network equipment surrounding the hypervisor. It gives us a tremendous amount of choice and flexibility.”

The company is already using the F5 BIG-IP application delivery controller (ADC), a load balancer and full proxy that is integrated with Cisco ACI through an open API. And the company plans to take advantage of additional solution integrations from the Cisco ACI partner ecosystem.

Segmentation and security

Because ScanPlus is supporting a large number of business customers in a shared cloud environment, data protection and strict tenant segmentation are essential. Designed for secure multi-tenancy, Cisco ACI makes it possible for applications and users to share the same infrastructure without leaking information across tenant boundaries.

“With Cisco ACI, we have full segmentation of each tenant, and can even create tenants within tenants,” Daiber says. “They are always private, always separated, always secure.”

The Cisco ACI whitelist model provides additional protection. It doesn’t establish connections are established without explicit instruction, and easily extends security policies, access control lists (ACLs), firewall rules, and quality-of-service (QoS) requirements are easily extended across multiple environments and hypervisors.

Speed of configuration, client onboarding

The company’s client onboarding process used to be costly and manual. Network specialists had to log into multiple systems to configure switches, firewalls, and virtual machines (VMs). There was always the risk of making a mistake.

Today, the process is fully automated using the Cisco Application Policy Infrastructure Controller (APIC), and all devices are configured with a single API call. What used to take hours now takes minutes, with no possibility of human error.

“A smooth onboarding process is critical,” says Bayer. “It builds comfort and trust from the beginning, and it’s the foundation of what we hope will be a longstanding relationship. Our customers are happier now because we can deliver our services faster.”

ScanPlus’ network operations team is happier too. Fewer tedious, manual processes means more time to work directly with clients, help them customize their cloud resources, and bring new services to market.

“Standardization and automation lead to speed and quality. If you do it right the first time, it will always be right,” says Daiber. “With Cisco ACI, we can define once and automate many times.”

Looking ahead

After extending the Cisco ACI network fabric to its secondary data centers, ScanPlus plans to automate the deployment of dedicated fiber connectivity for several thousand new customers. The company will further empower its software developers with additional automation and self-service capabilities.

Today, ScanPlus developers can deploy VMs without the assistance of the network operations

team. Soon they will be able to configure, deploy, and manage web services, firewalls, ACLs, and other network services—all from a self-service portal.

“We plan to implement more automation, more self-service, more multisite,” says Daiber. “We won’t stop with VMs and network services. We want to automate everything: applications, domain controllers, fully provisioned private clouds, and also integration with public clouds.”

For more information

To learn more about Cisco ACI, visit the following:

- [Cisco ACI overview](#)
- [Cisco ACI case studies](#)
- [Cisco ACI ecosystem partners](#)

Products and Services

- Cisco® Application Centric Infrastructure (Cisco ACI™)
- Cisco Unified Computing System™ (Cisco UCS®)
- Cisco IronPort™ email and web security
- Cisco Advanced Services
- F5 BIG-IP Application Delivery Controller
- Dell EMC VxBlock Systems