



What does IT and building a house have in common? Nothing beats a good foundation.

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Unified Endpoint Management from baramundi in the Hafner Group's IT

Anyone planning on building a house today faces a lot of challenges – not least the coordination between architects, building contractors and craftsmen. The Hafner Group offers all of this from one source. The company, founded in 1971 as a family business, started in the construction sector with three employees. Today, Hafner employs over 100 people at its locations in Kinding, Ingolstadt, Beilngries, and Greding. The Hafner Group is a medium-sized construction company with its own team of architects. In addition to classic building and construction activities such as bricklaying, concrete, and plastering work, both for private homes and in manufacturing, the company specializes in the planning and construction of turnkey building projects – in the areas of new construction, conversion, and modernization. The Hafner Group places particular importance on individual planning, a holistic, energetic approach and the reliable craftsmanship of its products. Due to its wide range of services, employees use a variety of programs, which have to be accessible at all times.

For this medium-sized company, cooperation with craftsmen from the region is crucial. The company has also gained considerable experience in environmental protection and energy-efficient houses.

A small team with a big challenge

The IT team at Hafner Haus consists of two IT specialists: Daniel Winkels and Günther Reil. Between the two, they manage 63 workstations/laptops in classic client management, two on-premise servers with over 40 virtual servers, as well as a handful of legacy systems in the IT department. They are also responsible for the smooth operation of the many smartphones used by project managers, site managers, and foremen, as well as all those who need to be accessible outside the company. Looking after all the systems that ensure accessibility within the company – such as e-mail servers and telephone systems – is also of key importance. As such, the IT team is tasked with ensuring uninterrupted operation of IT infrastructure as well as an intensive cooperation in process optimization and digitization. Along with standard software, the firm uses a whole range of custom-coded applications, some of which the IT team develops itself.



“Our systems run on Windows 10, and our aim is to have a new PC ready for use in the shortest time possible. Due to the different services we offer as a company, we also employ a wide variety of hardware – powerful CPUs for CAD construction planning, computers with VR glasses for meetings with clients, office computers for accounting and laptops for project managers,” explains Daniel Winkels. “Our processes are becoming more digital every day. Thanks to document and workflow management systems, we’re able to work regardless of physical location. Everyone should have 24/7 access to all the data that’s relevant to them. One of our greatest challenges is to sensitize our employees to the need for data protection and data security. Especially since many of our people are out in the field. Because of this, we pay very close attention to how we assign rights to our end devices. Users can only obtain apps from our kiosk. If a user lacks access rights, he or she can request them by way of a digital workflow. The requests go to the supervisor or management for approval, and are then submitted to IT for setup. In this way, we can track the “collective” process in granting an end-user right.”

Administration requires a stable foundation

For a long time, the two admins had to handle everything in a time-consuming “sneakernet-style” administration process. This meant using a wild mix of self-written scripts, web-based applications and controls via group policies. Only the company-wide “BauSU”

application was available via servers – all others had to be manually distributed. A central check to see which version was running on a given computer was not possible. Some users had to have local admin rights themselves to install updates. “The AD/scripts solution worked quite well in the beginning. But the problem was that we didn’t really have control over whether the computers being fed software correctly, or which version they were running. With some programs, we had to rely completely on built-in automatic updates. But that in turn led to different software versions being deployed within the company. It wasn’t a sustainable situation in the long run. We urgently needed more transparency instead of ‘artfully configured’ systems where no one could see how it was set up,” says Winkels. “That’s why I’ve personally dealt with configuration tools such as Chef, Puppet and PowerShell Desired State Configuration. However, I realized that for some applications it would be difficult to package them appropriately. And, whenever in doubt, this kind of effort would then have been necessary for every new software release. And it goes without saying that this creates a huge requirement for training.”

The turning point came when Günther Reil joined the team at Hafner. In his previous position, he had already gained experience with baramundi’s Unified Endpoint Management, and was familiar with the improvements in transparency, automation, and security that the solution could offer. “Günther said that baramundi was the only system he knew that did exactly what the sales representative had promised. All of our requirements were covered in the first meeting with the sales department and the system had an answer for every one of our questions. A test installation showed that it only took 10 minutes to distribute the agent.” “I gained a greater overview of our situation during the test installation – when taking inventory of the existing computers – than I had previously enjoyed over the span of four years,” explains Winkels. “The decisive factor for us was that we no longer had to waste our time installing every little bit of it ourselves. Incidentally, this also offered the advantage that, once a process had been properly set up with the baramundi Management Suite, it could be repeated error-free, as often as needed. We also liked the ability to automatically roll out programs that could only be installed using a graphical interface.”

Fast implementation – significant gains in efficiency

Once the decision had been made, everything proceeded at pace: “Within two days, everything had been completed, and all we needed to do was attend the training course offered by baramundi. I felt that the time we needed for the entire baramundi program would otherwise be spent rolling out a single new program.” The transition within Hafner IT made an immediate impact on everyday work: “The effects are most noticeable in the routine tasks that we can now run automatically and with no hassles. For example, the vulnerability scan starts every Monday now. Any vulnerabilities detected are immediately patched with managed software. This has made us more reactive overall. Now, it’s no longer a problem to immediately provide important software with updates or to try out new software, as we no longer have to install the software manually on every computer. Our security settings now force mobile users to connect to the corporate network to retrieve e-mail. This guarantees that they are regularly available for updates. With baramundi, users no longer need local administration rights – which has significantly improved the security of our IT system.”

Conclusion – transparency and automation

For the Hafner Haus IT team, pushing digitalization was a top priority in order to create traceability within company processes: “Creating transparency in the network without introducing new software via baramundi – I wouldn’t be able to do that with our large network. Once the job starts, everything runs fully automated. We’re now using the time we saved to further develop and improve our IT capabilities. Thanks to the modular structure, we only had to purchase the baramundi modules that we really needed. At the moment, we’re considering licensing the OS-Deploy module for our new PCs.” “The subject of reporting is also becoming more and more important. The bMS offers us useful functions for this process. We’re continually improving our application options here. As soon as something can be automated, we do it with baramundi. We’ve set up a special testing system for trying things out – a sandbox where we can play around. Our next project is to roll out Microsoft teams across the board.”