

The helm firmly in hand

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baramundi SaaS IT management at nicko cruises Schiffsreisen GmbH



nicko cruises Schiffsreisen GmbH is one of Germany's leading cruise operators. The company has grown from a leading river cruise operator with over 30 years of experience to become a renowned provider of destination-oriented ocean cruises and world tours. With its modern and comfortable fleet of 19 river ships and the classic, elegant ocean-going vessel VASCO DA GAMA, nicko cruises travels the world's oceans as well as the most beautiful inland waterways and coastal areas. The focus is on intensive travel experiences with plenty of time for discovery. The team of around 130 employees provides exceptional service to ensure that every cruise is an unforgettable experience for guests.

As an internationally active company, nicko cruises needs reliable and flexible IT. Chief Technology Officer Andreas Grasberger and his colleagues manage around 200 clients and servers – most of them on land at the headquarters in Stuttgart, but also with one to seven clients aboard each ship. Another six employees take care of data management, booking systems, and the associated platforms.

Infrastructure primarily in the cloud

Andreas Grasberger describes the challenges of this structure as follows: "We try to keep everything simple and efficient so that we can control and manage everything centrally with few IT resources. Most of our systems are already in the cloud or are mapped as software-as-a-service (SaaS). Central to our business is our booking platform, which we also operate as SaaS. In addition, we rely primarily on Microsoft services and software solutions. Here, too, we have moved operations to the cloud as much as possible.

"On-premises in the Stuttgart data center, we use a combination of Nutanix and VMware. We use this to virtually map almost the entire local server infrastructure. Our end users are all equipped with notebooks and classic Windows desktops without virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI)."

The biggest challenge: mobile working

"Our biggest challenge is that we make extensive use of mobile work and have to centrally manage clients located on ships around the world.

"The ship clients usually only come to Stuttgart once a year for maintenance. In between, there is no direct connection to our network, not even via VPN. This makes administration and maintenance very difficult, especially update and patch management, but also adjustments to local firewalls or security components. That was virtually impossible in the past or involved a great deal of time and effort. We were also unable to manage mobile workers effectively, as we were always dependent on setting up a VPN."

From on-premises to SaaS with baramundi

„The on-premises version was a challenge in the past. All devices within the network could be managed easily with baramundi, but we could only manage external clients if we ‚caught‘ them online with an active VPN. For ships without a VPN connection to the local network, we had to resort to remote sessions and limit ourselves to the bare minimum.

„At the same time, however, it was not an option to do without baramundi, so the new SaaS product came at just the right time. The option of using baramundi as a service was an absolute game-changer for us.

“Previously we were unable to access all devices permanently and reliably with the on-premises version. Now we are now able to detect and manage 100% of servers/clients without having to open the firewalls. In addition, we were in the process of decommissioning our last remaining SQL server. The elimination of SQL server support made the SaaS solution particularly attractive, as the costs are significantly lower compared to our own local or cloud SQL solution.

“The baramundi SaaS solution also offers us a decisive advantage in terms of security. We do not need any local gateways or other intermediate components that, in the worst case, would have to be accessible from outside the company.”

Uncomplicated implementation

“As part of the migration, we decided to throw the old system overboard and start from scratch with a clean slate. Implementation was very easy and quick with the entire platform prepared by baramundi. In the end, all we had to do was attend a workshop for the go-live. We were live after less than a day of workshop.

“Since the SaaS solution was a completely new baramundi product, we had expected some „teething problems“ and changes in handling on our side. In fact, everything went smoothly. Even for us in IT there were no major changes in terms of working with the Management Suite. We were very pleasantly surprised by the smooth integration of clients without direct contact, which works virtually via email.”

Advantages of the SaaS approach

„From an IT perspective, the biggest advantage of Management Suite as a Service is that we can now inventory and manage 100% of our clients and servers with baramundi. Clients and tasks that couldn't be managed are now a thing of the past.



On top of that, we save the entire cost of running our own SQL instance.

“Thanks to the AnyDesk integration, it is now also possible to securely access all clients worldwide and perform maintenance from within a single application. This saves a tremendous amount of time for first-level support.

“We have been using baramundi for over 10 years and did not want to lose the advantages and knowledge we have gained in this area. The existing functions in the baramundi SaaS solution cover our requirements exactly with:

- Inventory
- Software distribution
- Update/patch management
- IT compliance
- Defense Control
- Remote Desk
- Network Devices
- Application Usage Tracking

Conclusion

“We are currently rolling out our new antivirus solution simultaneously worldwide on all our clients at the touch of a button. We now have no clients on which we have to perform setup and configuration manually. Thanks to baramundi jobs, all clients were ‘fueled’ as soon as they established an Internet connection. I would also like to mention that our direct contact with baramundi is excellent. We rarely have support requests — and when we do, we always receive very quick and, above all, competent assistance.”