A world-leading manufacturer of flexible packaging and labels standardized its IT infrastructure with Equinix and now benefits from high-performance global cloud services and cost-effective data connections.

 "When we acquire new companies, we often don't get the connections together fast enough. Equinix gives us an advantage here. Because many cloud providers also use Equinix infrastructures, interconnections are far easier to make."

Andreas Miehle, CIO, Constantia Flexibles

Overview
Constantia Flexibles initially wanted to consolidate the central services from two of its local data centers into one. But none of its existing data centers had the ability to completely absorb all the services of another. Partnering with Equinix brought many advantages: better access control than an in-house data center; enhanced reliability; and reduced risk by housing the IT systems away from the production site. Consolidating provided additional compliance benefits, with fewer locations to monitor and easier integration of new users through cloud services following acquisitions.

Business challenge
The IT infrastructure at Constantia Flexibles had grown repeatedly over the years, until it became very fragmented. The company wanted to standardize and consolidate, while at the same time adding the ability to use more new technologies and cloud services going forward. The EMEA and USA infrastructures were initially consolidated to regional data centers and brought together as technological units. The next step was to outsource the services.

The solution
The existing data centers had reached their limits, and there was insufficient capacity to consolidate the systems. Constantia was faced with the choice of expanding one of them or looking to Equinix for outsourcing. Key reasons behind their decision to work with Equinix were access to cloud services, good access control and reliability. Also appealing was the prospect of having a data center outside of the production sites to minimize risk.

In the first step of the process, Constantia Flexibles outsourced its main controller, SharePoint Exchange, to back up and restore systems to the Equinix Frankfurt data center. The company plans to relocate its SAP and Dynamics AX systems there as well, with deployment by the end of 2016.

Customer Profile

History
Constantia Flexibles is a world-leading manufacturer of flexible packaging and labels. The group provides its products to numerous multinational companies and local market leaders in the food, pet food, pharmaceutical and beverage industries.

Customers
The company has more than 4,000 customers worldwide. Upwards of 10,000 employees in 55 production locations in 24 countries supply innovative, flexible packaging solutions on a global level. The business of Constantia Flexibles is divided into three divisions: Food, Pharma and Labels.

Headquarters
Constantia Flexibles is headquartered in Austria with 55 production locations in 24 countries.

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Constantia wanted to convert its Microsoft Office environment, including SharePoint, to a cloud solution. This would be of particular benefit for future acquisitions. "When we acquire new companies, we often don't get the connections together fast enough. Equinix gives us an advantage here as many cloud providers also use its infrastructures," said Andreas Miehle, CIO at Constantia Flexibles. Constantia decided to use Microsoft Office 365. This meant the company could continue using its existing Microsoft Office environment—simply moving to a cloud installation—and avoid the daunting task of training 5,000 employees to use a new product.

The solution also allowed Constantia to switch to the Microsoft Cloud in the background. Equinix enables cloud structures like this to run efficiently, as the large cloud providers are all part of the Equinix infrastructure, making connection easy. This represented a cost savings as well, by eliminating the need to incorporate the mail servers of acquired companies. Getting new lines in place takes time and money. Using Microsoft Office 365, Constantia can connect a new user to a Microsoft Office 365 server in the cloud on-site. This is connected to the cloud server in Frankfurt, which is a logical unit with its internal mail server. This means that Constantia can quickly connect its users to base services after acquisitions. The company can also register the new users with Microsoft, which gives it a better overview of the licenses.

Reaping the benefits

For Constantia, the ability to provide every application from a single location is an enormous benefit when it comes to managing its IT. It also makes integrating acquired companies far easier. Former licenses no longer need to be migrated; instead, users can simply register with the cloud service and the connection is made using cost-effective data tariffs on-site.

High security standards were another key advantage. Only equipment that Constantia orders itself is used in the data center. And Equinix ensures that trained staff are available around the clock. If a hard drive fails, Constantia informs the supplier, who then sends a replacement to Equinix. Constantia notifies them of the delivery and Equinix replaces the drive. With Equinix trained personnel on-site, Constantia no longer needs to employ its own staff to perform these tasks.

Growth through takeovers is made easier due to the Equinix global presence and wide acceptance among relevant cloud providers. Employees in new parts of the company can be connected to local data centers and easily integrated into the infrastructures remotely.

Constantia did not choose outsourcing to save money, but rather to increase quality of service. Even so, its internal expenditure on compliance-related matters has decreased considerably. Now, monitoring can be done via a centralized recovery and backup system, eliminating the need for systems monitoring at individual sites. In future, there will be three sites around the world with an interface to the Equinix data centers, where the company can demonstrate the IT systems' compliance with defined quality criteria. Miehle currently oversees almost 80 sites. The first site, Frankfurt, should be fully up and running—including its ERP system—by the end of the year, and the infrastructure in Miami is also currently being expanded. The third site will be in Singapore.

Results

- 80 IT sites have been consolidated to 3 data centers
- Compliance is simpler with fewer sites to manage
- It is easier to connect new staff following company acquisitions
- Global IT infrastructure is assured by the Equinix global footprint
- 24/7 access to trained staff is available without having to employ in-house resources