

BT INFONET EXTENDS GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS REACH FOR BAYER AG



Bayer AG is an international, research-based company active in health care, crop protection, polymers and chemicals. Headquartered in Leverkusen, Germany, Bayer AG is comprised of 350 legal entities, employing about 120,000 people worldwide, and represented in almost every country in the world. Its stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol BAY.

Dr. Peter Sindermann is responsible for the international IP data network employed by CNB (Corporate Network Bayer). With a worldwide network of offices in seven time-zones, across five continents, and a commitment to “just-in-time supply around the clock” – Bayer’s offices, warehouses and all other facilities must be able to communicate 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Bayer’s SAP must be available to all offices and research centres across time zones, in order to disseminate data resources like stock levels, research and the results of clinical tests daily without interruption. Email is presently the largest application on the system, with 150,000 users (and numerous external partners). This sophisticated, exigent level of accessibility makes asynchronous communication essential. As Dr. Sindermann states, “If our communications don’t work, nothing does.”

Global requirements for the overall network management infrastructure increased drastically in 2001, when Bayer replaced the mainframe and SNA networks previously utilised with open client/server systems and the introduction of SAP. The commercial data of each corporate sector are stored on centralised computers accessible on every continent. As a result of network demands, global applications needed to be revamped and newly implemented, including globalisation projects involving collaboration by the research centres.

Bayer decided what was globally required was an IP-based, clear-channel network, with two global rings connecting the main nodes in the USA, Europe and Asia. With this circuit upgrade, resilience of the headquarters in Leverkusen, for example, would be assured through the use of several independent access points belonging to different carriers.

Presently, around 600 sites are connected to the global network. Whereas Bayer consistently maintains a clear channel backbone approach, it utilises inexpensive frame relay for its data communications in the individual countries. What Bayer now required was a new telecommunications partner to help achieve their network objectives on a regional basis.

Asia: An important market with difficult infrastructure

Asia-Pacific is a particularly important market for Bayer, since the large agricultural areas in this region make intensive use of pesticides produced regionally. To ensure the Asia branch of the network would offer the same reliability, speed and security that Bayer is accustomed to globally, Dr. Sindermann was particularly interested in replacing Bayer's IBM SNA network in Asia. Thereby, finding a communications partner with the combined strengths of global reach, in addition to specific expertise within the region. "We expected our telecommunications partner to support us not only in major industrial regions, but also 'exotic' local sites as well," stresses Dr. Sindermann.

BT Infonet successfully fought off strong competition during the request for proposal process and was chosen as

the exclusive Asia-Pacific provider. "One of the many reasons for choosing BT Infonet is its good reputation in the chemical sector," states Dr. Sindermann. "BT Infonet was able to meet our high requirements regarding availability, fail-safeness and support, in addition to guaranteeing service levels with 99.98% availability. An added selling point was BT Infonet's 30+ year history in Asia, and their strong regional presence with 13 Asia-Pacific offices."

BT Infonet's class of service (CoS) offerings, contained within its Asia-Pacific frame relay network, was a particularly attractive feature for Bayer. This regional infrastructure

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offered Bayer the option to customise its network applications to select the most suitable service option, down to each individual connection. Bayer now has access to optimum performance characteristics for each application through a separate path across the network, and has achieved complete global connectivity and support with fully managed services. In addition, Bayer chose to use PerspeXion® for all Web-based reporting. With this service offering, Bayer can control its Global Frame Relay network, receiving timely and accurate information about performance and utilisation, which thereby maximises overall company ROI.

Global network requiring regional scalability and flexibility

Dr. Sindermann was also concerned with finding a provider who could meet Bayer's networking requirements as data volume continues to evolve, with Bayer immediately looking to consolidate certain global network functions into regional service centres. "What used to be just a local appli-

cation is now part of our global communications requirements, which increases the demand for bandwidth on all routes,” states Dr. Sindermann. Nevertheless, innovative services, such as prioritisation, ensure that awaiting user demands are met in an expeditious manner.”

Flexibility becomes essential, especially as Bayer builds new sites in remote, agricultural markets where, as Dr. Sindermann stresses, “colleagues often don’t think about the required network connections until the last minute.” Dr. Sindermann therefore expects a telecommunications partner of Bayer to “act as a facilitator in the case of local problems,” which is why BT Infonet’s Singapore office has proved to be invaluable.

Bayer and BT Infonet have already forged a strong partnership in Asia-Pacific. The companies look forward to an on-going business relationship as BT Infonet continues to offer new products and services to meet the needs of Bayer’s ever-evolving global communication requirements.

About BT Infonet

Infonet Services Corporation, a member of the BT Group plc group of companies, known for its quality of service, is a leading provider of managed network communications services for multinational entities.

Employing a unique consultative approach, BT Infonet offers integrated solutions optimising the complex relationship between enterprise applications and the global network. Extensive project management capabilities are the foundation for the services and solution offerings (broadband, Internet, intranet, multimedia, videoconferencing, wireless/remote access, local provisioning, application and consulting services) positioning BT Infonet as a single-source partner for multinational entities. In particular, BT Infonet IP VPN solutions offer multinationals a unique combination of Private and Public IP services as well as a full set of Managed Security and Mobility Services.

Rated “Best in Class” overall in Telemark’s survey of Global Managed Data Network Services, Infonet Services Corporation

has also won “Best Customer Care” and “Best Carrier” at the World Communication Awards. Founded in 1970, Infonet Services Corporation owns and operates The World Network®, accessible from more than 180 countries, and provides local service support in over 70 countries and territories.

Additional information about Infonet Services Corporation is available at www.bt.infonet.com.

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