

CASE STUDY

AUSTRIA



SERVICES

ARUBA REMOTE ACCESS ENABLES HOME WORKING AS AUSTRIA'S EMERGENCY BREAKDOWN SERVICE SHIFTS GEAR IN RESPONSE TO COVID



With over 3,000 calls each day, ÖAMTC's open-plan Vienna call centre is usually buzzing. But the Covid pandemic meant that its 200 agents needed to work safely and securely from their new home office environment.



Austria loves its 'Yellow Angels'. Around 2.3 million members trust the services of ÖAMTC – not only with breakdown assistance but with travel planning, legal and insurance issues, vehicle inspection services and driving technique training.

“When it comes to matters of mobility, we’re the right contact,” says Christoph Pertl, IT Security Officer at ÖAMTC. “Our members ask a lot of us.”

The facts show that, despite the internet, smartphone apps and social media, members prefer to talk. In 2019, 1.14 million calls were made to the ÖAMTC emergency number. Almost 970,000 calls were to request information and advice. In the same period, just 8,700 breakdown assistance requests were made via the ÖAMTC app.

COORDINATING A NATIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The ÖAMTC call centre in Vienna sits at the heart of the organisation’s national coverage. It links 115 local offices, eight driving technology centres and 17 emergency doctor helicopter locations throughout Austria.

Telephony at the centre is IP-based. A robust IT infrastructure underpins the entire operation across the 200-seat open-plan office and it works seamlessly in normal times. However, the rapid spread of Covid forced the closure of offices across Austria; ÖAMTC was no exception.

“The lockdown measures hit us just like any other company in Austria,” Pertl admits. “Fortunately, we had a certain head start.”



REQUIREMENTS

- Rapidly deploy remote access for call centre response teams throughout Austria
- Ensure secure and resilient service
- Simplify management across unified network

SOLUTION

- Unified and Instant Access Points in company locations
- Remote Access Points (RAP) for home offices
- Mobility Controller HA Cluster
- Virtual Mobility Conductor
- Campus Distribution and Access Switches
- Aruba Central cloud-based management platform

OUTCOMES

- Enables ÖAMTC to continue support of emergency response teams as Covid closes national call centre
- Requires minimal IT intervention to provision secure remote network access
- Establishes a highly available mission-critical remote working solution
- Provides full wired and wireless corporate connectivity at home for PC, IP-telephone or printer

ENABLING CALL CENTRE FUNCTIONALITY AT HOME

Since most employees, and especially the call centre agents, were no longer allowed to work in the open-plan office, there was only one solution: create a home office.

ÖAMTC employees were no strangers to mobile work or to the home office. To start with, all recovery and rescue vehicles have been connected to the company network as proverbial ‘rolling offices’ for a long time. Also, the emergency aid team members in the call centre have been able to function through remote access.

“In order to react flexibly at peak times and to quickly involve additional employees, around 30 ‘remote’ workplac-



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CHRISTOPH PERTL
IT Security Officer, ÖAMTC

es had already been set up for some ÖAMTC employees long before Covid,” Pertl explains.

PIVOTING THE ENTIRE APPROACH TO NETWORK MANAGEMENT

That it worked so well was also due to a decision Pertl had made in 2018. Together with Kapsch BusinessCom, a long-time trusted IT service provider, he started looking to replace the ageing WLAN infrastructure at individual ÖAMTC locations throughout Austria.

The goal had been to design a unified network architecture that made it easy for the IT team to enable ÖAMTC employees to carry out tasks securely from anywhere at their respective bases through seamless internet access.

Following these requirements, Kapsch tailored a state-of-the-art network for ÖAMTC for all locations, apart from the two data centres and the main headquarters in Vienna, based on a unified Aruba architecture. In total, nine regional head offices support the local offices and service locations around the country. All of these locations are equipped with Aruba wired and wireless infrastructure

and are managed via the cloud-based Aruba Central platform. The wireless environment is centrally managed by a cluster of Aruba-7205 Mobility Controllers, orchestrated via a Mobility Conductor hosted in the central headquarters’ DC.

“At that time, we implemented a cloud-based controller solution in the wireless network for all hubs and regional headquarters,” says Pertl. “That literally opened up a new world for us.”

ENSURING SIMPLICITY AND EASE OF USE

Thanks to this unified and highly scalable network design, when Covid struck it was possible to roll out large numbers of Aruba remote access points (RAPs) all over Austria in a short period of time – and without IT employees having to drive through the country and personally install them.

Simplicity reigns. Because the RAPs come preconfigured for company-specific network requirements and with the highest level of encryption and user authentication security, they can be controlled via Aruba mobility controllers which also act as VPN concentrators. The automated fail-over and high-availability configuration of the controllers ensures uninterrupted operations for all remote offices, just as they would have in the central office.

The Aruba RAP setup allows ÖAMTC to extend its company network to home offices with the same security and access policies applied. As a result, the RAP allows the company to connect and authenticate a printer and to use the same IP-telephony system as in the office, with no difference in access or security experiences. All software and feature updates are managed remotely by IT, with the same approach as for any of the company locations.

“Plug-and-play was the order of the day. For every employee in the home office, the following had to apply: unpack, plug in and get started. That worked wonderfully,” says Pertl.

If additional IT support was necessary, the ÖAMTC IT team could address it and provide a solution quite comfortably from its own home offices. Pertl says simplicity and ease of use has been key:





“We didn’t want to turn the network into rocket science. The beauty of the Aruba architecture is that it works the way it’s supposed to work, with minimal support and very few headaches.”

THE FLEXIBILITY TO COPE WITH AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Within a few weeks of Covid sweeping through Austria, the entire ÖAMTC call centre workforce was provided with secure, standardised, home-based and high-performance access to the network. Today, almost 300 Aruba RAPs are doing their job for ÖAMTC across Austria and the number is rising.

Pertl sees himself and the ÖAMTC network as well equipped to cope with whatever is needed, thanks to the future-proof Aruba architecture and the experience he



has gained with the Remote Access Point project. The home office is here to stay, he says: “The call centre was more or less the beginning. Further administrative areas in our association will follow. I’m convinced that hybrid working will become part of everyday life.”