NTT Communications executes multi-vendor program to complete Lawter’s one-shot move to cloud

Background: A chemicals company with a global footprint

Lawter Inc., a part of Harima Chemicals Group, is a pioneer of quick-set printing inks. Established over 60 years ago, the company is a result of many successful businesses coming together. Today, Lawter is strong in pine chemicals and products developed using pine chemical resources and serves the adhesives, graphic arts, specialty coatings, aroma chemicals and the synthetic rubber industries. Lawter’s strength is built on strategically sourcing raw materials and providing a global network of manufacturing capabilities. Headquartered in Chicago, Lawter has 11 manufacturing and technology centers and operates in over 13 countries worldwide.

Objectives: Modernize and consolidate infrastructure

Lawter wanted to consolidate the hosting of its internal infrastructure by moving it to one location. This infrastructure consisted of a SAP platform in the US, which hosted Lawter’s internal Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems used daily by the company’s employees in 13 locations including USA, New Zealand, Argentina, China, Netherlands and Belgium. It also included a number of other applications such as Active Directory service and Microsoft SharePoint. Lawter needed a single location hosting solution that can bring operational simplicity in maintaining its internal applications.

Lawter wanted a hosting provider that could offer 24/7 service support to cater for its 13 office locations worldwide.

Antony Poppe, Global Network and Virtualisation Manager, Lawter Inc, said:

“We wanted to consolidate and modernise our ICT infrastructure distributed across 13 countries and NTT Communications perfectly understood that. It proposed a viable solution that integrated disparate technologies and diverse applications into one modern hosting solution.”

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Solution: Multi-vendor infrastructure, detailed cutover

To host Lawter’s SAP platform and internal applications such as Zemeter, Livelink, and SharePoint, NTT Communications was able to provide a hybrid storage solution with other NTT Group companies. The solution combined physical servers and virtual scalable infrastructure, with production environments based in the Amsterdam data center and disaster recovery hosted in London.

NTT Communications used a combination of technologies like Ethernet and wireless connectivity to provide reliable and fast connectivity to Lawter’s multiple office locations and connect to locations without fixed infrastructure.

Challenges: ‘Big bang’ migration to cloud, large amount of data

As Lawter’s operations were spread in remote locations, it needed reliable connectivity with sufficient bandwidth in hard to access areas. Lawter wanted its migration to be a one-time move, rather than a phased approach. This made sense for Lawter as it had multiple interdependent and critical systems running on the SAP platform. The ‘big bang’ move meant that a huge amount of data had to be moved from one system to the other, adding transatlantic complexity.

Lawter’s existing setup involved a mix of technologies with different providers for its current WAN, DC, hosting and SAP management. Consolidating these into one cohesive solution was a challenge. This also meant that the new provider would have to work with a number of third party providers and agencies across the world, and integrate everything into one viable solution.

Antony Poppe, Global Network and Virtualisation Manager, Lawter Inc, said:

“The case for a big bang move to the cloud is not a common one, but this was a clear requirement for us. This came with a huge risk as any issues during migration could have affected multiple applications. NTT Communications executed a fool-proof migration plan to manage this for us. The schedule was thorough and took care of all dependencies which proved that a one-shot migration to the cloud is achievable with the right planning.”

Mayank Patel, Programme Manager, Cloud and Managed IT Services – Solution Delivery, NTT Europe, said:

“This was one of the most challenging migrations we have handled. The one-shot transatlantic move required meticulous planning. We tested extensively and did pilot migrations to prepare for the big move. We investigated all applications and inter-dependent systems beforehand and worked this into our migration plan. This made sure there were no surprises during the cutover of live services onto the NTT Communications platform.”

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The migration of Lawter’s core systems from America to the production environments in Amsterdam was performed over the weekend, to not interrupt the workweek. A detailed migration plan was created to keep track of the various interdependent components of the switchover from the US to Europe. Ahead of the actual move, multiple test migrations were completed to detect issues that may occur during a ‘big bang’ move.

By setting up a temporary high-speed link using existing global infrastructure and having multiple backups in place, NTT Communications ensured that multiple terabytes of data was transferred overnight without any loss of transactional data. Backup measures, such as shipping a Network Attached Storage (NAS) drive with the data to the Amsterdam data center ahead of the migration weekend, were put in place.

**Benefit**

Lawter has the flexibility to work with NTT Communications and other NTT Group companies under a single contract helping Lawter benefit from the hosting solution and migration expertise.

The reliable network backbone reduced network latency during the transatlantic migration and delivers services in remote areas of the world, which suits Lawter well as it has offices in hard-to-access locations.

Lawter makes use of a virtualized environment to host many of the internal applications used by its employees in 13 locations worldwide and this infrastructure is scalable and pay-for-use. To support the maintenance of this infrastructure, Lawter receives service from one helpdesk which takes ownership of WAN, cloud and application related issues, to resolve problems easily and quickly get new projects set up.

Antony Poppe, Global Network and Virtualisation Manager, Lawter Inc, said

“We do not have vendor-agnostic hosting solutions in the market yet. The cloud industry is still maturing in that respect. In this scenario, having the option to choose a global infrastructure solution that fits our needs, as well as having a top notch partner like NTT Communications to transform an intricate requirement into a practical solution, is a big plus. The considerable expertise that NTT Communications has in delivering complex solutions was critical to the success of this project which is ahead of its time.”