

MORE EFFICIENT IT – ENSURED

Insurance company in Italy lowers management costs by 40 per cent and boosts service levels by nearly a third



Finance & Insurance | Italy

Business needs

A move to new offices presented AXA Assistance Italia with the ideal opportunity to lower the cost of ensuring business continuity. It also wanted to future-proof its infrastructure and improve end-user productivity.

Solutions at a glance

- [Cloud Client-Computing](#)
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- [Enterprise and Client Support](#)
- [Networking](#)

Business results

- Zero disruption thanks to quick installation
- Three years' growth accommodated with new environment

- 15% lower network management costs
- 15% lower total cost of ownership compared to competitors

40%

lower business continuity costs



30%

better service levels



AXA Assistance Italia is part of the AXA Group. It provides services — including motor vehicle breakdown assistance, medical and emergency services for travel insurance, and excess protection — for the insurance sector. The firm also manages call centres offering multilingual, 24x7 support for policyholders. Its parent company is the world's premier insurance brand, according to the 2016 Interbrand survey, with 103 million customers worldwide and a turnover of €99 billion (US\$107).

An opportunity to optimise

To give its customers and their policyholders the best possible service, IT at AXA Assistance Italia has to run smoothly. When the company decided to move to new offices in Rome, Marco Gaeta, the chief operating officer and chief information officer, saw an opportunity to implement new technologies that could help the business. The firm's existing hardware was nearing the end of its lifecycle, and Gaeta and his team wanted to replace it with an environment that could handle growth for the next three years.

Speaking about the issues he was looking to address, Gaeta says, "With our old environment, we could guarantee acceptable availability, but at a price. We had redundant hardware, and our five IT staff had to put in a lot of manual effort. We were looking for a way to guarantee maximum business continuity at a lower total cost of ownership." To achieve this, it needed to reduce the management burden of its tape-based backup solution, and redesign its network to tolerate outages more effectively.

The move was also a good time to rethink the firm's desktop strategy. The traditional desktop environment created the classic challenges of a PC-based solution. Management was both time consuming and expensive. Of the many administrative burdens, rolling out new machines and moving desktops between locations placed most load on the team. "We thought that cloud client-computing would solve all these problems," says Gaeta.

A partnership to bank on

AXA Assistance Italia has been a Dell EMC customer since 2008, but for this end-to-end project it was looking for a more comprehensive partnership. "We needed support and guidance before, during and after the move," says Gaeta. Dell EMC consultants began by holding workshops with AXA Assistance Italia's IT team and application engineers to discuss system requirements and business needs. Together, they defined short- and medium-term roadmaps.

"We then rigorously tested Dell EMC's offering against that of HP and Cisco, and found that the Dell EMC technology was a step beyond. But, crucially, the service from Dell EMC was clearly first class as well," says Gaeta. For example, Dell's cloud client-computing team demonstrated the effectiveness of the cloud-based backup solution by successfully failing over to the Dell EMC Lab in the University of Pisa, which is part of the Dell EMC Customer Solution Center (CSC) network. "Dell EMC provided excellent presales services, including extensive on-site consulting and hands-on demos targeted at our specific needs, rather than just showing us specification sheets," says Gaeta.

End-to-end refresh

Today, AXA Assistance Italia's entire IT estate is based on Dell EMC. Its network has two Dell EMC Networking S-Series switches at the core, with 18 Dell EMC Networking N-Series switches at the edge, and 13 Aerohive AP130 wireless access points. Storage for the cloud client-computing environment is provided by a Dell EMC Storage SC4020 array, while Dell EMC Infrastructure Managed Services provides cloud-based backup and maintains a disaster recovery location for AXA Assistance Italia at a remote data centre. It uses the modular Dell EMC PowerEdge FX architecture for servers in its own data centre, with four Dell EMC PowerEdge FC630 server blocks dedicated to its cloud client-computing environment, and three blocks for disaster recovery. A Dell EMC PowerEdge R730 server with an Intel® Xeon® processor is also used with Sophos security software. AXA Assistance Italia's 300 staff will use Dell Wyse 5040 all-in-one thin clients.

Dell EMC Deployment Services helped with the logical reorganisation of the network, the setup of the new infrastructure and migration support. Gaeta says, “The installation was smooth. It took just a few weeks and there was no service disruption. The Dell EMC team fully assisted our IT staff during the installation and deployment phase.”

Doing more with less

The new environment has now been in place for a year, and Gaeta believes it has improved business continuity and eliminated risk of downtime, all with less management time and cost. “Management costs for business continuity have been reduced by up to 40 per cent,” he says.

Higher level of service

AXA Assistance Italia can now offer a superior quality of service and flexibility to its end users and customers. “We estimate that we provide a 30 per cent better service now,” says Gaeta. “For example, the new networking infrastructure — and tools such as Dell OpenManage Network Manager — allow us to virtualize network items and the data centre in a much faster and more agile way, and without incurring high management costs. This means we can build test and development

environments in minutes instead of the days it would have taken in the previous infrastructure. We’ve lowered overall network management costs by 15 per cent.” Gaeta also estimates that these combined savings have contributed to a total cost of ownership that’s 15 per cent lower than competitive offerings.

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Marco Gaeta, chief operating officer and chief information officer, AXA Assistance Italia



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