

Improving global communications with UCP



SSAB

Saving time and money through unified communications

Business Situation

SSAB is a Swedish steel company with 8,400 people in more than 45 countries worldwide and production facilities in Sweden and the US.

With people working in offices around the globe, good communications are essential. Even within Sweden the distance between the main HQ and some of the production plants is so great that visits from one to the other can take a full working day. SSAB saw video conferencing and digital collaboration from PC to PC as a way to transcend distance.

The company also looked to cut telecommunications costs. Desktop telephones are expensive and sit unused when employees travel or work from home. They needed something more flexible. Merging computers and communications, enabling people to talk to one another using their PC, would help to achieve SSAB's goals.

The company wanted to take "a deeper look at the potential of unified communications," according to Claes Jurstrand, SSAB IT Infrastructure Manager. They wanted to see what tools were available to improve communications, enhance collaboration and provide more flexibility for his colleagues.

Business Technology

Unified communications links conventional telephone systems with instant messaging, presence, online conferencing, email and voice-over-IP computer phones, as part of Avanade's next-generation workplace solution.

Avanade implemented a Microsoft Unified Communication Voice Lighthouse pilot with 100 SSAB employees. Using Microsoft Office Communication Server® 2007 R2, connected to SSAB's Aastra MX-One PBX, the pilot put telephone software onto users' PCs.

Using webcams or headsets, employees can make and receive calls, set up video conferences with colleagues, pick up their voicemail from their email inbox and use Microsoft® LiveMeeting for desktop sharing and real-time collaboration.

"In many ways", says Jurstrand, "people now expect this kind of capability. Younger employees probably use tools like Skype™, Facebook®, instant messaging and so on at home. What Avanade have done, with Microsoft technology, is to bring these tools into the workplace, with security, reliability and manageability".

"It was very successful. These tools really work. People can collaborate in different ways: make calls, video-conference, share their desktop, share presentations and chat in real time. It really is a substitute for get-together meetings. Avanade did a good job for us. Their know-how and support was essential."

**– Claes Jurstrand, IT
Infrastructure Manager, SSAB**

Results

The new tools benefit individual users and the company as a whole. On a personal level, employees find it easier to set up ad-hoc meetings. "It's easier to get in touch with people," says Jurstrand. "You can start chatting with instant messaging, invite another colleague, start a live meeting and then go to video conference – seamlessly, and using familiar Microsoft software".

It also saves people time. For example, instead of spending a day driving across Sweden for a meeting "you can have a two hour conference in the morning and then work for the rest of the day," explains Jurstrand. It's less stressful and more flexible. This is also a benefit for the business: travel costs are lower; people are more productive.

SSAB has already moved from prototype servers to a fully scaled-out production environment. Claes Jurstrand plans to roll out the solution to most of the company's employees. This means that the company can share in the benefits discovered during the pilot project.

About SSAB

SSAB is a global leader in value-added, high-strength steel. In 2009, the Group's turnover was approximately SEK 30 billion. SSAB employs 8,400 people in over 45 countries around the world and operates production facilities in Sweden and the US.

SSAB has been listed on the NASDAQ OMX Nordic Exchange, Stockholm, since 1989 and is on the list of the most heavily traded shares. Shareholders include Swedish and international institutions and private investors. The largest single shareholder is Industrivärden. Market value at year end 2009 was almost SEK 39 billion.



About Avanade

Avanade provides business technology services that connect insight, innovation and expertise in Microsoft® technologies to help customers realize results. For more information visit www.avanade.com

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