



## Microsoft Online Services Partner Solution Case Study

# MIT-GROUP

## Online Services Enable IT Service Provider to Meet Growing Customer Demand

### Overview

**Country or Region:** Switzerland

**Industry:** IT Services

### Customer Profile

The MIT-GROUP has been helping organizations throughout Switzerland and Central Europe meet their IT needs since 1996. The MIT-GROUP offers everything from coaching, consulting, and engineering services to full outsourced applications services and support.

### Business Situation

In a harsh economic climate, MIT-GROUP wanted to find a cost-effective and compelling way to meet customers' evolving messaging and collaboration needs.

### Solution

The MIT-GROUP meets clients' needs with the Business Productivity Online Suite, a cost effective messaging and collaboration solution from Microsoft Online Services.

### Benefits

- Complements and extends existing services
- Delivers cost-effective services
- Opens doors to new consulting initiatives
- Elevates MIT-GROUP's standing as a trusted partner

“The Business Productivity Online Suite . . . enables our sales people to offer a range of alternatives and help customers save money in a tough economy.”

*Dr. Peter Meyer, President and Founder, MIT-GROUP*

Since 1996, Swiss IT service provider MIT-GROUP has offered a broad range of customer-focused services—from coaching and training to hosted solutions. It has always tried to standardize its hosted solutions to enable a seamless integration in existing infrastructures. Increasingly, though, organizations were asking for enterprise-class solutions with non-standard features, for example to extend e-mail access with only certain functions enabled. With the Business Productivity Online Suite from Microsoft Online Services, MIT-GROUP found just the solution to meet these needs. With the Business Productivity Online Suite, MIT-GROUP can provide a cost effective, scalable solution to which costumers can subscribe on a per-user, per-month basis. It also provides MIT-GROUP with the opportunity to sell additional services that both add value to clients and add income to its bottom line.

“The real revenue opportunity for us is to add value through the Software plus Services model. That’s where we can differentiate our company and help our clients succeed.”

Dr. Peter Meyer, President, MIT-GROUP

## Situation

Businesses around the world are looking for ways to do more with less. These days it’s not just prudent business practice—it’s a matter of staying in business. Organizations need to be able to respond quickly to opportunities, coordinate activities among multiple workers, and present a consistent, well-informed image to customers. To accomplish all that, organizations need powerful messaging and collaboration tools—from e-mail and instant messaging to shared calendars, contact lists, and collaboration tools. But gaining access to these kinds of services has traditionally been a costly proposition that requires racks of servers, dedicated IT resources, a redundant infrastructure, and more. For many small and mid-sized organizations, that kind of investment is not always feasible. Yet the need for these services remains undiminished.

Since 1996, Swiss IT service provider MIT-GROUP has been supporting small and mid-sized organizations with a wide range of IT services—from coaching and consulting to managed services, security, even hosted services such as Hosted Microsoft® Exchange 2007 and Hosted Microsoft Dynamics® AX. It works with companies in more than 20 vertical industries, from finance to forestry, and offers specialized solutions to support these markets. While MIT-GROUP continues to offer hosted solutions, it was also looking for ways to scale operations and offer e-mail and collaboration services to wider range of customers—without making additional investments in licenses and hardware.

When MIT-GROUP discovered the Business Productivity Online Suite from Microsoft Online Services, it found precisely the solution that would enable it to extend its service portfolio and meet new customer needs.

## Solution

The Business Productivity Online Suite from Microsoft Online Services enables MIT-GROUP and its clients to gain access to a range of enterprise-class services without having to procure or maintain an in-house infrastructure for those services. Microsoft Online Services enables access to collaboration tools and shared workspaces, workflow, desktop and mobile e-mail, calendaring and contacts, instant messaging, presence, audio/video conferencing, and Web conferencing. Yet because the applications supporting these services—including Microsoft SharePoint® Online, Microsoft Exchange Online, Office Live Meeting, and Microsoft Office Communications Online—run on servers residing in a state-of-the-art Microsoft data center, none of the organizations using these services need to invest in on-premises infrastructure to take advantage of these services. At the same time, because Microsoft Online Services offers Microsoft Active Directory® sync and co-existence, companies with an existing messaging and collaboration solution, MIT-GROUP clients can effectively extend the reach of their existing messaging and collaboration domains without adding to or reconfiguring their existing services.

Microsoft hosts and maintains the servers with its own staff of hardware and software experts, supplies patches and security updates in real time, and guarantees 99.9 percent uptime with a financially-backed SLA so MIT-GROUP clients always have access to the latest, most up-to-date versions of the applications to which they subscribe.

The Business Productivity Online Suite offers still other advantages to MIT-GROUP and its clients. Instead of having to purchase separate server and client licenses for infrastructure components such as Microsoft Office SharePoint Server or Microsoft

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Dr. Peter Meyer, President, MIT-GROUP

Exchange Server, organizations using this service can simply subscribe to the applications they want to use. Users subscribe to the service on a per-user, per-month basis, which eliminates large up-front licensing costs and enables most organizations to cover the nominal expense of accessing these services using operational rather than capital budgets. Small and mid-sized organizations can provide their users with access to the entire Business Productivity Online Suite for one low monthly fee. If a user needs access to only one service—Microsoft Exchange Online, for example—it is possible to subscribe to a single service only for an even lower monthly fee.

Also available from Microsoft Online Services is a Deskless Worker version of the Business Productivity Online Suite. This offering, available at a nominal cost, provides a streamlined experience of the standard Business Productivity Online Suite to employees who do not need access to all the services offered by Microsoft Exchange Online or SharePoint Online. The Microsoft Exchange Online Deskless Worker offering, for example, enables an employee to access a subset of the Microsoft Exchange Online services using Microsoft Outlook® Web Access. It also provides online storage space to users. The SharePoint Online Deskless Worker offering provides read-only access to materials residing in a SharePoint Online document library—perfect for those users who only need occasional access to online documentation and who do not need to access the more advanced SharePoint Online features.

#### **Connecting the Mobile Worker at Schmelzmetall**

MIT-GROUP client Schmelzmetall exemplifies the kind of organization for which the Business Productivity Online Suite offers the perfect solution. Schmelzmetall produces

high performance copper-based alloys using vacuum furnaces. These alloys are processed to semifinished and finished products for use in different applications, such as resistance welding, diecasting, plastic injection technology molds, non-ferrous and ferrous metallurgy molds, as well as electric motors. While the company’s headquarters are in Gurtellen, Switzerland, the company also has manufacturing facilities in Hungary and Germany.

MIT-GROUP has been providing managed services and IT support for Schmelzmetall for several years. Schmelzmetall already uses Microsoft Exchange Server and several vertical applications such as MS Dynamics AX, which MIT-GROUP runs from its data center. However, Schmelzmetall management wanted to enable a small number of users to gain easy access to a limited set of e-mail services. Both for security and cost reasons, Schmelzmetall management was reluctant to add these users to its existing Exchange implementation.

Schmelzmetall executives raised the issue with MIT-GROUP, which immediately suggested providing these additional workers with access to the Business Productivity Online Suite from Microsoft Online Services. With Microsoft Active Directory sync and co-existence, Schmelzmetall could effectively expand its e-mail domain without adding these users to its existing Exchange infrastructure. For a nominal monthly fee that Schmelzmetall can easily cover out of its operating rather than capital expense budget—and with no additional risk to the integrity and security of its existing infrastructure—the company’s additional users gain access to the messaging and collaboration tools they need to be productive.

“The Business Productivity Online Suite really distinguishes us and helps us increase our position in the marketplace.”

Dr. Peter Meyer, President, MIT-GROUP

## Benefits

Microsoft Online Services and the Business Productivity Online Suite enable MIT-GROUP to expand its portfolio of services to meet an even broader set of customer requirements. Its hosted messaging and collaboration offerings can still meet the needs of customers who require dedicated servers or high levels of customization. For customers who need an enterprise-class messaging and collaboration solution that does not require dedicated servers or that their data reside in a specific country, the Business Productivity Online Suite from Microsoft Online Services can meet their needs. MIT-GROUP can even offer to extend an existing Hosted Exchange infrastructure with the Business Productivity Online Suite, which enables an MIT-GROUP customer to extend the reach of its messaging and collaboration infrastructure in an extremely cost-effective manner.

## Expanding Reach

“The Business Productivity Online Suite enables us to meet the needs of whole new GROUPs of customers,” says Dr. Peter Meyer, President and Founder of MIT-GROUP. “It enables our sales people to offer a range of alternatives and help customers save money in a tough economy.”

The fact that MIT-GROUP can offer to extend existing messaging and collaboration infrastructures through a subscription to the Business Productivity Online Suite or the Business Productivity Online Suite Deskless Worker offerings also opens new doors.

“There are many companies that are supporting their white collar workers with our Hosted Exchange solution,” says Meyer.

“They want to extend e mail services to their blue collar workers but can’t justify acquiring additional licenses. By subscribing to the Business Productivity Online Suite or even Microsoft Exchange Online Deskless Worker,

though, they can easily and cost-effectively extend services to their blue collar workers.”

## Increasing Revenue

Meeting these customer needs means increasing revenue for MIT-GROUP, and not just through reseller fees. While MIT-GROUP does receive a fee from Microsoft for each client that subscribes to the Business Productivity Online Suite, the real opportunity for the service provider’s revenue growth lies in the differentiated managed services it can offer clients through the Software plus Services model—and by building trusted advisor relationships with its customers. For MIT-GROUP, signing a new client to the Business Productivity Online Suite means opportunities for upselling its consulting, coaching, and other value-added services. For its clients in specialty vertical markets, offering access to the Business Productivity Online Suite means opportunities to move clients of older POP3 mail services and to integrate their critical vertical applications with an enterprise-class messaging and collaboration application, an integration effort that could streamline their key business processes and accelerate their ability to serve their customers.

“We have never wanted to be just a reseller of Microsoft products,” says Meyer. “The real revenue opportunity for us is to add value through the Software plus Services model. That’s where we can differentiate our company and help our clients succeed.”

From a financial standpoint, the opportunity to add value appears as though it will pay handsome dividends, too. Microsoft projects that for every U.S. \$1 a service provider gains from recurring revenue fees associated with the Business Productivity Online Suite, it is likely to make between U.S. \$5 and \$6 from service-related fees.

## For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

For more information about MIT-GROUP products and services, call +41 44 687 3302 or visit the Web site at: [www.mit-group.ch](http://www.mit-group.ch)

## Increasing Business Velocity

With the Business Productivity Online Suite, MIT-GROUP is also in a position to increase the power and efficiency of its customer sales and service teams. Its personnel can initiate and close deals more quickly, perform value-added customization and configuration services remotely (lowering internal costs by as much as 40 percent), and increase its margins by redirecting internal resources toward the delivery of higher-value strategic services. The fact that MIT-GROUP can get a client up and running on a Business Productivity Online Suite solution in a matter of days or weeks is an added benefit. It can deliver the solutions that the customer needs when the customer feels the need most acutely, and that goes a long way towards helping position the company as a trusted advisor.

“With the Business Productivity Online Suite from Microsoft Online Services, we’re perceived as a technology leader that can deliver the most up-to-date solutions,” says Meyer. “The Business Productivity Online Suite really distinguishes us and helps us increase our position in the marketplace.”

## Microsoft Online Services

Microsoft Online Services is a business-class communications and collaboration software offering delivered as a subscription service, hosted by Microsoft, and sold with partners. These services help make it easier for customers to rapidly and cost-effectively access the most up-to-date technologies, and are designed for rapid deployment to provide customers with streamlined communications, simplified management, and business-class reliability and security.

For IT staff, Microsoft Online Services helps reduce the burden of performing routine IT management tasks such as installation, provisioning, ongoing maintenance, patches, updates, and upgrades, making it possible for them to spend more time on initiatives that move the business forward. These services are backed by strong SLAs and are designed to meet the regulatory compliance and reliability needs of enterprise customers. On a technical level, the services boast the sophistication and reliability that customers expect from Microsoft, which continues to invest heavily in building data centers to support these services.

For more information, visit: [www.microsoft.com/online](http://www.microsoft.com/online)

## Software and Services

- Microsoft Online Services
  - Microsoft Exchange Online