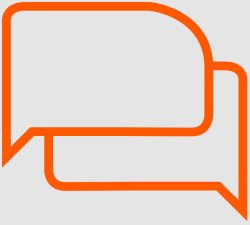




Fresenius deletes 86% of unused applications ahead of its move to the cloud

In the highly regulated health care industry, Fresenius wanted a structured IT solution that would help it modernize its workplace, enhance the employee experience and create sustainable business value. A Lotus Notes sunsetting and migration to SharePoint Online was one important step in this process. With the help of Avanade, Fresenius turned an ecosystem, which grew too much over the years and will run out of support soon, into a managed one based on Microsoft 365 and SharePoint Online.

To learn more about the challenges and opportunities for this workplace modernization effort, we spoke to Timo Emrich, Senior Manager SharePoint Applications and Projects at Fresenius Netcare GmbH.



Q: Why was this workplace migration important for Fresenius?

A: From Fresenius' perspective, this was a strategic project to migrate the Lotus Notes ecosystem to the Microsoft 365 cloud. There were bigger projects, but what we did was the migration from Lotus Notes to SharePoint Online and Microsoft Flow. It was really important to migrate the company's applications to the new technology stack to get rid of the old Lotus Notes system, the associated costs for the infrastructure and licenses, and the risk of having an unmaintained environment. We have never done anything like this before. It was a challenge to get through all the different locations and come to a conclusion.

Q: There were tens of thousands of applications deleted during this migration. Can you explain why there were so many unnecessary applications?

A: Unfortunately, the Lotus Notes ecosystem we had in place was not centrally managed – only the servers were centrally managed but not the applications on it. For this reason, over the past 10-15 years, the involved IT units – Fresenius Netcare, the local IT and other business units – started developing their own Lotus Notes applications, resulting in an ecosystem that was overgrown throughout the years.

When we started this project, this was one of the challenges. We started with an analysis of the activities and then did some heavy sunseting and housekeeping activities to identify the potential deletion candidates. Of the more than 17,000 existing database applications on more than 170 servers, only about a hundred applications were migrated by our project team.

Q: What is the benefit of the new, consolidated ecosystem?

A: In the future, we will have a centrally managed SharePoint Online environment with application lifecycle management

for the applications deployed to the new environment. With more control, it will be easier to tackle, even prevent, the application challenges of the past.

Q: Were there any specific considerations, in terms of security or industry regulations?

A: We had a complex project organization. We had more than six stakeholders on the customer side because Fresenius is not one company. All stakeholders are participating in this project. With one major stakeholder, we also had some additional legal restrictions and we weren't allowed to delete the data.

Q: You consulted a lot of stakeholders when implementing this solution. Why was it important to involve them in the process?

A: At the end of the day, we are responsible for their project, and they have to agree to all steps and approve all steps. So, if we want to delete databases, we need the stakeholders' approval for all activities as well as sign-off from local businesses to reach the goal of getting rid of unused databases and migrating as little as possible. I think that was the most important and demanding topic.

Q: Were there any challenges you faced in getting acceptance and buy-in?

A: The problem was there were so many stakeholders with different goals and different timeframes for the migration. It was really difficult to harmonize different interests and get them under one approach. We decided in the middle of the project to split this one project up into three or four subprojects to reflect the individual needs of the business. Some wanted to move fast and wanted us to finish early while others wanted more time to think about the situation and decide about the databases. We thought dividing up the project would be more successful and meet our timeframe.



Q: How is this migration affecting how your employees do their work today?

A: Hopefully, the employees are happy to work with the new technology stack. There are many advantages to SharePoint Online, like the whole integration with the Microsoft 365 suite. They are now working with state-of-the-art technology with modern, web-based applications with mobile accessibility – things that were not possible before. When we were on Lotus Notes, there was no mobile access or limited mobile access; now we have a really modern technology stack available that can be extended as the user wants it in the future.

Q: How might this solution impact Fresenius' business and its customers? And how are you able to use these tools to deliver better products and services to customers?

A: At the end of the day, we hope this whole Office 365 solution – with its modern, cloud-based tools – will result in higher productivity for our Fresenius employees. They will have modern ways of developing applications and implementing business processes that support digitalization initiatives with SharePoint Online, Microsoft Flow, Microsoft Power Apps and everything available in the Microsoft Azure stack.

Q: What value did Avanade bring to the table?

A: Avanade had very good and skilled employees with strong technical backgrounds. They were also highly motivated. They brought process know-how to determine how best to eat this big elephant of over 17,000 applications and how to structure a project that had never been done like this before at Fresenius. A key success factor was having this know-how on board to help us structure the project and run it through critical situations with our internal customers. The collaboration was positive. It was really perfect delivery support.

Q: What are you most proud of with this project?

A: I am most proud of how we started with a pure assumption-based approach – a general list of some databases and meta information that was manually classified and categorized. From this information, Avanade was able to structure the whole project, moving from assumptions to facts. At the end of the day, we met the budget and timeline and were able to get rid of the majority of unused applications. We also have a clear phasing-out-date for the remaining ones.

Q: What advice do you have for other businesses that may be pursuing a similar migration?

A: When you have internal customers, one key success factor is having buy-in and also a commitment from them to participate in the project, make decisions and contribute their work. That's really important.



About Fresenius

Fresenius is a global healthcare group offering high-quality products and services for dialysis, hospitals, and outpatient treatment. With over 290,000 employees in more than 100 countries around the globe, and annual sales exceeding €35 billion, Fresenius is one of the world's leading healthcare companies.



About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud-enabling services, business solutions and design-led experiences, delivered through the power of people and the Microsoft ecosystem. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation and has 38,000 professionals in 25 countries. Visit us at www.avanade.com

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North America

Seattle
Phone +1 206 239 5600
America@avanade.com

South America

Sao Paulo
AvanadeBrasil@avanade.com

Asia-Pacific

Australia
Phone +61 2 9005 5900
AsiaPac@avanade.com

Europe

London
Phone +44 0 20 7025 1000
Europe@avanade.com