



Peter Blomgren, global IT manager at Höganäs AB and Thomas Somrell, business manager for the project at Atea, believe that collaboration with Microsoft has gone well.

About Höganäs AB

Höganäs AB is the leading global producer of metal powder. Its products have a number of applications such as in vehicle components and white goods, water purification and surface coatings. The company, founded in 1797, reported sales of SEK 6103 million in 2008 and is listed on the NASDAQ OMX Stockholm.

Höganäs - Fine old company with modern tools

Höganäs AB is well on its way to rolling out Windows 7 and Office 2007 in a global environment, which is described as “just 1500 users, but as complex as if it were 100,000.” They are eager to benefit from everything contained by both Windows 7 and the Microsoft Windows Server 2008 R2 server solution.

THE COMPANY DATES BACK to the eighteenth century when they started to mine for coal in Höganäs. The town is probably best known to the man in the street for its stoneware pottery. However, today Höganäs AB manufactures metal powder, which is used for everything from the manufacture of cogwheels to enriching breakfast cereals with iron. The company has factories and sales offices throughout the world, and therefore, when they embarked upon their project in January 2009, they badly needed to simplify the client management process.

“Collaboration with Microsoft has gone extremely well,” says Peter Blomgren, global IT manager. “They even sent representatives to visit us here in Höganäs in early January. When we came to discuss the platform, they actually recommended us not to invest in Vista, but to wait.”

Global needs

The system platform was one thing, but the company needs were far wider than that. The IT department is responsible for

some 1500 clients at 21 locations throughout the world. Up to now, these have been processed manually. The company needed a centralised client management system with standard clients, especially seeing the company was to upgrade to Office 2007 when implementing Windows 7. The Swedish corporate governance code states that users may not install anything on their computers themselves, but for practical reasons everyone has had admin rights up to now – a practice that will eventually have to be discontinued.

”In all the years I have spent in the IT business I have never experienced such pressure.”

“Atea was involved right from the start and showed us Jumpstart, which is what we decided on,” Peter tells us. “Many of the requirements placed for IT activities by the corporate governance code will be met using this tool. We will be

able to manage things completely differently and will be able to assign temporary rights to users to enable them to make changes themselves when needed.”

Added value with W7

Peter Blomgren has a lot of good things to say about Windows 7, which he has tested on various machines in the company.

“Windows 7 has many added advantages, such as faster start-up, longer battery time, simpler working methods and all the other features included. It has been easy to sell the project in the company; there is much more enthusiasm than there was for previous system changes. In all the years I have spent in the IT business I have never experienced such pressure. But the really major change for users will be that from Office 2003 to Office 2007.

New communications channels were needed to deal with the planned rollout and centralise management of Windows 7 and applications.

“Höganäs is a geographically widely spread company,” says Tomas Somrell, who was the business manager for the project at Atea. Today they have a WAN network with a 2 Mbit line between 21 locations, but this is not enough for the planned rollout of Windows 7. Special distribution points are now being set up around the world. The first points are being tested and evaluated right now.

The Höganäs W2K8 R2 server solution and the enterprise agreement includes many tools such as App-V and BitLocker. In the rollout of Office 2007 it is planned to use the App-V tool to avoid problems with transition.

Opportunities for self testing

“We will be rolling out Office 2007 to all clients,” says Peter, “but we have also packaged Office 2003 as an App-V application. Users will be able to test their documents and applications themselves. For example, if they have problems with files, they can run both 2003 and 2007 in parallel for a few months while they convert the files from the new format – a great advantage.”

For a long time people have been seeking a tool like Jumpstart. Up to now, the IT department has had to deal with a lot of manual processing, PC by PC.

“Our environment is complex. It’s as though we had 100,000 users and not just 1500,” Peter tells us. “Simplicity is the driving force and the whole idea of the project. At the moment we might have to spend several days troubleshooting a machine. Jumpstart will make things so much easier both for the IT department and ourselves. The aim is a half-hour job, otherwise we “give up” the machine and re-install. To do this we have a simple way of getting out Windows 7 and simply loading applications into the machine again and installing.”

At the moment there is intense activity packaging and virtualizing as many of the applications as possible – the business critical ones in particular – to simplify the installation work.

“During the initial run of the inventory tool in Jumpstart, we identified 10,050 applications, versions and special builds,” Tomas Somrell tells us. “A coarse screening removed 4000, in a second run we removed 3000 more and now we are making a final inventory. We want machines to have at least 80 percent of their applications installed right from the start, and we need to identify what may have to be performed manually.

Problem Free Project

Höganäs is evaluating all the applications which come with the server solution and the new system platform. In future, besides Direct Access there will be BitLocker encryption of disks and external units, such as USB memory sticks.

“As long as the function is there, suits us and meets our security requirements, we will use it,” says Peter.

Before the year is out, the whole organisation will make use of Windows 7 and Office 2007. So far the project has not encountered any problems that could not have been foreseen. Höganäs is up to 25 pilot tests and the rollout phase seems to be proceeding smoothly and problem free. Four PC models have been certified, the settings required for the rollout have been found, and the final one is being customised at the moment. As far as training is concerned, Höganäs has decided to use web-based self-instruction. Peter believes collaboration with Atea has gone very well.

“We were given a good project description, and we have had to discuss very little. The response time between our reporting a problem until we were given a solution has been quick as a flash, the service level is extremely high and the same goes for the knowhow of all involved. It feels like they have been here before,” Peter says in conclusion.

The Höganäs Project

- Jumpstart is Atea’s concept which is based on Microsoft SCCM and Microsoft deployment toolkit – automated client management for 1500 clients around the world.
- Rollout of Windows 7 standard client done to four different PC models and 1500 users.
- Höganäs AB introduced functions such as BitLocker and Direct Access, which is a part of Windows 7 together with Windows Server 2008 R2.
- Inventory, rationalisation and virtualization of applications done with Microsoft App-V for automatic installation via Microsoft SCCM.

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