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Swisscom and Helvetia Ready for the insurance business of the future with the right partner

In accordance with its corporate strategy and corresponding IT projects, Helvetia Insurance deploys (public) cloud technologies and engages in close collaboration with partner companies. During the evaluation process, Swisscom managed to win several important projects and is now playing a key role in their implementation. Two of these projects are presented below.

The insurance industry is not immune to digital transformation. Services such as on-demand insurance policies, online contracts and cyber insurance policies are all increasing the pressure on traditional insurance companies. It is also vital that they use digitisation to their advantage – if not, they run the risk of quickly becoming uncompetitive. In addition, innovative InsurTech start-ups and established tech firms such as Google and Amazon are now entering the insurance sector. Conventional insurance companies often have to rely on collaboration with experienced technology partners just to keep pace with this new form of competition. For insurers, a comprehensive, future-focused IT strategy addressing these issues is the basis for the business of the future.

Helvetia Insurance has formulated new targets and procedures for its IT department in line with its corporate strategy '*helvetia 20.25*'.



Target 1

Buy before make

Helvetia Insurance uses the expertise of appropriate technology partners and deploys standard solutions, enabling it to focus fully on its own core competencies. In-house development is only promoted in areas where differentiation from the market can be achieved.

Target 2

Cloud First

In order to achieve greater flexibility, Helvetia aims to move as many applications and as much data as possible to the cloud by 2022. Cloud computing means that Helvetia is in a position to respond more effectively to market changes and to deliver products and applications rapidly and with scalability.

Target 3

Enhanced customer convenience

The deployment of digital solutions should increase customer convenience. Helvetia Insurance uses data in a targeted manner to improve its services for customer and partners and to ensure they are cost effective.

As a result of this comprehensive IT transformation process, Helvetia has already launched numerous IT projects and re-evaluated its partnerships, with Swisscom selected on several occasions. This offers Helvetia a number of advantages. A single contact is available to the insurer across a range of different projects. There are also clear responsibilities and boundaries. What's more, Swisscom has a holistic view of the different sub-projects, which greatly facilitates the overall project management for Helvetia. Two key projects in which Swisscom plays an integral role are presented below.

Helvetia Reference Case

Swisscom and Helvetia

- Swisscom and Helvetia collaborate as partners and share the same corporate values.
- Swisscom provides a holistic view of the different sub-projects and therefore facilitates project management for Helvetia.
- The flexible and agile collaboration between Swisscom and Helvetia has led to success in a number of projects.





Case 1: Cloud First, Buy before make **Swisscom supports Helvetia in the implementation of its cloud- based data warehouse**

In terms of data management, Helvetia is firmly committed to the use of cloud services and outsources its operation to specialist partners, while establishing a high level of data expertise within the company itself. Swisscom is supporting Helvetia in setting up its up-to-date, cloud-based data warehouse.

Helvetia is reliant on in-depth data insights and fast, high-quality data provision. The company is currently undergoing a process to transform it into a data-driven business. One of the aims of this transformation is to deliver a modern data management system, as well as cutting-edge tools for analytics and business intelligence (BI). In the future, data analysis will no longer be the preserve of the experts. Instead, thanks to a high degree of self-service options, it will now be accessible to a wide user group, according to Sandra Hürlimann, Head of Data & Analytics at Helvetia. “In the current DARTS (data are our assets) project, we are significantly expanding data provision and our analytics capabilities by working with Swisscom to establish a cloud-native data management platform.”

Systematic migration to the cloud

The insurer has been operating one of the existing data warehouses (DWH) itself for around 20 years. “It still functions effectively and is the centrepiece of our data management system. However, the system cannot meet the demands of the future,” says Sandra Hürlimann.



The DWH has been developed in various programming languages and is directly connected to Helvetia's overall system landscape. To satisfy increasing demands and extend its potential uses, Helvetia decided to operate a cloud-based DWH. The new solution is designed to be the basis for a wide range of analytics applications and to be integrated into a modern BI landscape. For example, the Power BI reporting tool can be used to access all the relevant data from any workstation, to enable in-depth knowledge about customers to be used more quickly and flexibly.

Close collaboration with Swisscom

Helvetia decided to set up and operate the system in Microsoft Azure because of the functions it offers. The new DWH was designed together with Swisscom as the strategic implementation partner. "Our challenge is

"We were glad that we could count on Swisscom's expertise."

Roman Brosowski, Lead Architect D&A, Helvetia

to systematically migrate the system with its numerous business-critical processes from the old reality to the new reality during ongoing operation," says Roman Brosowski, Lead Architect D&A at Helvetia. He outlines the differences in principles, guidelines and architectural requirements compared to the current system: "While we operate the existing warehouse and handle a lot of the detail ourselves, we are now buying in integrated services. New concepts such as SaaS require a completely new way of working. The API or events-based streams come in different data formats, depending on the source." It is therefore important to be able to respond flexibly and to understand how to deal with this type of integration. "We were therefore happy that we could count on the Swisscom experts' specialist knowledge. They have a great deal of experience in these types of transformation and are supporting us in the design, implementation and operational set-up," says Brosowski.

New opportunities and benefits of the cloud

The first two use cases to test the operation of the new data warehouse are now under way.

Helvetia Reference Case

Data Analytics/ Data Warehouse

- Helvetia worked with Swisscom to set up a cloud-native data management platform.
- As the strategic implementation partner, Swisscom advised Helvetia on the design, implementation and operational set-up.

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Flagship applications that particularly benefit from the new cloud functionalities were chosen for this. Roman Brosowski: “We are therefore handling new use cases, for which we previously had no solution. For instance, we can now use real-time applications. With the old system, we work with daily data processing and must therefore take delays into account.”

Integrated change management

Alongside the changes in technology, employees also have to deal with changed terms of use for the tools. “This transformative process is accompanied by an intensive communication strategy, and we are involving the employees in the changes,” says Sandra Hürli-mann. The transformation is not seen as a big bang but rather as a closely supported, ongoing process.

Video communications are an integral part of change management: “We used videos to support the entire PoC. These are always produced and released once we have tested and validated an architecture change,” explains Roman Brosowski. The changes are clearly illustrated in the videos. They show, for instance, how a new query works and the format in which the system returns the response. Some of these videos have been the most-viewed clips on the internal video platform.

Data usage instead of operational tasks

According to Roman Brosowski, the ability to handle data is incredibly important for Helvetia. He describes the company’s internal expertise as a treasured asset that must be preserved. “Swisscom ensures that the operation is as straightforward as possible and relieves us of those tasks that do not differentiate us from the competition, allowing us to focus on our core business. We don’t have to know how to update an application in the cloud or operate the database. But we do know how to handle the data contained in it.”

Helvetia Reference Case

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Case 2: Cloud First **SAP migration to Microsoft Azure**

Helvetia Insurance has chosen services provided by Swisscom and Microsoft Azure to migrate and operate its entire SAP landscape. This mammoth project is now well under way, and – despite the tight schedule – is on track to meet the deadline. Swisscom’s technical expertise and outstanding customer knowledge are major contributing factors in this.

To efficiently manage its business processes, Helvetia Insurance deploys a range of different, up-to-date SAP solutions. For around 20 years, the company outsourced these services to a major global IT provider, which ran the SAP solutions in a conventional systems environment. With the expiry of this contract at the end of 2021 and as part of its reformulated IT strategy, Helvetia decided to re-evaluate its entire SAP operation. According to Kurt Häner, Head of Corporate IT Solutions at Helvetia, “Digitisation and the journey to the cloud are the fundamental factors in Helvetia’s IT strategy. In order to modernise our IT in the SAP environment too, and increase our flexibility, our entire SAP operations will therefore also be run in the cloud in the future.”

In summer 2020, Helvetia launched a tender process for a new infrastructure and basic service provider, in order to transfer the cloud operation of all SAP solutions to the new provider. These include the live ERP and CRM systems and the SAP Business Warehouse, as well as SAP FPSL, in order to ensure future compliance with the new accounting standard IFRS 17. Helvetia took a highly targeted approach to selecting participants for the tender process and made a conscious decision not to be



restricted in its choice of cloud solution. The candidates were therefore free to decide which cloud provider they wished to propose to Helvetia (AWS, Azure, Google, etc.).

Technical expertise meets customer knowledge

The ten short-listed companies were whittled down to a final two, including Swisscom, which carried out a corresponding assessment with Helvetia for its proposed solution to operate SAP on Microsoft Azure. This proved to be a successful approach, as Kurt Häner explains: “In the assessment, each member of our internal evaluation team awarded Swisscom the most points, as they were able to demonstrate significant SAP knowledge – from the applications to the infrastructure architecture. Swisscom’s existing in-depth Azure expertise was another crucial factor in the decision.” Swisscom also showed

“A partnership based on mutual trust and collaboration is important to us.”

Kurt Häner, Head of Corporate IT, Helvetia

how Helvetia could optimise its IT landscape and presented several options for the basic SAP operation – depending on the future strategic position chosen by the insurer. The migration to the Microsoft Azure cloud environment was launched in February 2021, with the project scheduled for completion by the end of the same year: an extremely ambitious schedule, which they immediately set about tackling. Early on, Swisscom and Helvetia established a joint project organisation encompassing Helvetia’s various SAP teams as well as security, governance and process requirements. The team immediately set to work on the project – before the contracts were even fully signed. “Both sides wanted to press on with this project as quickly as possible without losing time,” says Häner. “Having a partnership based on mutual trust and collaboration is very important to us, and we quickly realised that this is also a priority for Swisscom. It meant that we were able to get the project started during this transitional phase. I really appreciated Swisscom’s straightforward, accommodating and collaborative approach.”

Helvetia Reference Case

SAP on Azure

- Helvetia is transferring the cloud operation of its entire SAP solutions portfolio to Swisscom, as its infrastructure and basic service provider.
- Swisscom and Helvetia’s joint project organisation also encompassed security, governance and process requirements.

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Good progress on a tight schedule

Despite the ambitious schedule, the project is on track: “We’ve already completed two thirds of it,” says Micha Altmeyer, Project Manager at Helvetia. “The CRM system and some of the legacy systems have already been migrated. At present, we are working on migrating SAP Solution Manager and the BW-HR landscape.” In addition, the SAP Business Warehouse migration was deliberately prioritised so that an evaluation of the new capabilities of Azure and the connection to Power BI could be undertaken together with the Data & Analytics team. Swisscom is also part of this project.

When the first systems were migrated, there were a few of the usual teething problems to be resolved, such as bandwidth issues at Helvetia. However, did not result in any major delays to the schedule, not least thanks to

Helvetia’s effective planning and Swisscom’s foresight. A solution from the SAP portfolio to replace all of the old, non-HANA-based system databases that required a licence was also recommended to Helvetia. In this regard, Swisscom made Helvetia aware of faster and easier migration methods for its systems at an early stage, which facilitated effective project planning.

Helvetia and Swisscom have yet to start the migration of the ERP finance and reinsurance landscape. It was a conscious decision to leave this mammoth task until last: “We wanted to gain initial experience with the smaller, simpler systems, so that we can migrate the larger ERP systems to the cloud with only minimal testing required,” explains Micha Altmeyer. “Helvetia is running some other very important business projects internally at present. We can’t afford to be distracted by a difficult migration.”

Helvetia Reference Case

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