SmartBee takes competitive edge in Switzerland with Azure and WVD

Based in Switzerland, SmartBee provides IT infrastructure services to small and medium-sized enterprises. Their medium to long-term strategy is to migrate all services from their local servers to Azure. But first they wanted to know more about Azure's technology and cost structure, build confidence and learn how it worked for them and their customers.

The Challenge

SmartBee provided their IT services, including virtual desktops, under SPLA licensing from local servers. Gradually they faced the challenge that the complexity and cost of the SPLA structure made their services less competitive than cloud services. In addition, SmartBee experienced more effort to maintain their servers and almost reached the point where they had to make high investments to refresh their server park.

The company decided to adopt a cloud-first strategy. However, there was a serious obstacle: Azure and public cloud in general, was still a no-go in Switzerland. Customers were very reluctant to store their data outside the country or were even legally obliged to have their data reside in Switzerland. "Local data residency was actually one of our USPs; none of the major vendors were represented in Switzerland so far," says Cédric Good.

Quick Overview

SmartBee was faced with high investments in server hardware in order to continue to deliver services, such as VDI, under their current service standard.

As soon as the first Azure data centre in Switzerland opened, the company consulted Insight for advice on how to organise their journey to the cloud.

Working with Insight, SmartBee gained confidence to deploy Azure and Windows Virtual Desktop and onboard new customers or migrate existing ones.

> "When Microsoft opened their first Azure data centre in Switzerland, we immediately took the opportunity to be one of the first Service Providers in our country to deliver Microsoft Windows Virtual Desktop and complementary Azure services in the cloud. The Insight Cloud Journey got us started."
>
> Cédric Good, CEO, SmartBee, Switzerland

The Solution

The situation changed when Microsoft opened their first Azure data centre in Switzerland and Windows Virtual Desktop (WVD) became generally available around the same time.

Cédric Good: "We already offered virtual desktops, so this was our chance to start with Azure and take Windows Virtual Desktop on board as the next-generation virtual desktop service for our customers." SmartBee onboarded Insight's Cloud Journey and attended the Azure Jumpstart session on WVD in Switzerland. Cédric Good found the Jumpstart session very useful and inspiring. "We learned the fundamentals of WVD and the underlying Azure infrastructure with the focus on the Service Provider business.

We then planned a Discovery workshop with Insight and delved deeper into WVD, entirely tailored to our company's needs. We built our first Lab to learn and understand all the technical aspects and requirements on how to deploy Windows Virtual Desktop in Azure.

These details were very important for us, as was the relationship we built with Insight and their support to work together on this."

The Benefits

"Both Azure and WVD were new to us," continues Cédric Good. "So we needed a reliable partner with a good understanding of the Azure infrastructure and services, but also one who was able to really listen to our needs and get us up and running. Insight fills this gap between Microsoft and the company. They gave us the valuable advice and helped us to build and experience Azure and WVD ourselves.

There were pitfalls on the road – some Azure services were not yet available in Switzerland for example – but Insight always showed their expertise in finding alternative solutions. The Insight Cloud Journey gave us the confidence we needed to deploy WVD for our customers.

This is an important step for our company to implement our cloud-first strategy and gain a competitive advantage as one of the first Service Providers in Switzerland to offer Windows Virtual Desktop on Azure. And as we continue with Azure, we know that we can count on Insight as a reliable partner to help us transform to the cloud," says Cédric Good.

> "Azure has so much to offer, that you definitely need an expert to guide you through and get the best result."
>
> Cédric Good, CEO, SmartBee, Switzerland

The Results Highlights

Confidence to deploy WVD and additional services in Azure and gradually decommission local servers.	Maintain a lead in Switzerland by deploying WVD on Azure and gain the competitive advantage.	Follow a cloud-first strategy for the coming years and avoid high investments in hardware.

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