

DELIVERING ON THE NEED FOR SPEED

Case Study

CUSTOMER

HBPO Group

WEBSITE

hbpogroup.com

LOCATIONS

HBPO Group has operations in 32 locations worldwide, with headquarters in Lippstadt, Germany.

INDUSTRY

Automotive Manufacturing

At a glance:

Formed in 1992 after the joint venture of three automotive suppliers, HBPO Group is the only company in the world specializing in the design, development, assembly and logistics of complex automotive front-end modules, also known as “the face of the car”.

Situation:

For HBPO’s network teams, dynamic company growth, globally distributed locations and a number of legacy networks posed an increasingly demanding challenge to efficient IP Address Management (IPAM). A slow and complex commercial IPAM product and functional gaps in native server tools, prompted a renewed search for a stable, reliable and fast network administration solution.

Solution:

After trying out all the major IPAM solutions on the market, HBPO opted to invest in the Men & Mice DNS, DHCP and IP Address Management (DDI) Suite. The straightforward, hassle-free deployment of the Men & Mice Suite on top of the largely Microsoft-based HBPO network infrastructure, significantly sped up every DNS- and DHCP-related workflow. The Men & Mice DDI Suite has left HBPO with a stronger, faster, more secure and more reliable network underpinning their highly specialized production processes.

The exponential rise in global connectivity has left no business untouched by the critical pillars of the internet: DNS, DHCP and IP Address Management. This includes the factory floor, regardless of whether it’s the manufacturing of pencils, or the production of highly specialized automobile parts. To ensure optimal output, all modern manufacturing facilities are deeply dependent on reliable, stable and fast networks. For HBPO Group, an effective network is mission critical.

Making Faces

HBPO Group was formed in 1992 from the joint venture of automotive suppliers Hella, Mahle (formerly Behr) and Plastic Omnium. The market leader in their field, HBPO Group specializes in the design, development, assembly and logistics of automotive front-end modules. Basically, HBPO Group makes ‘faces’ for cars.

HBPO’s car faces range from the familiar features of Nissan, Renault and Volkswagen to the somewhat rarer front silhouettes of Bentley, BMW and Porsche, as well as almost every automobile face in between.

Headquartered in Lippstadt, Germany, HBPO optimizes their individually tailored solutions by running 32 production plants and research facilities in close vicinity to their customers’ production facilities across the world.

Having experienced a significant increase in sales and production since 2010, HBPO receives orders for individual modules every minute of the day. To HBPO, a well-functioning network is indispensable to their success.

The Need for Speed

When their VitalQIP license expired, HBPO Group, as a Microsoft shop, decided to go native and make do with the IP Address Management tools built into Microsoft servers. Despite the useful native server tools, the HBPO team quickly realized that the distributed and dynamic nature of their operations called for a unified network overview and centralized management.

To Daniel Döring, an HBPO System Administrator, global collaboration was key. With IT personnel all over the world tending an assortment of networks with mixed histories, it was critical that all team members came on board from the word go.

“For us it’s important to be able to manage everything from everywhere in a sense. It’s not just about centralization, which is an important aspect, but also allowing the people on site to do their jobs, and be self-sufficient in certain regards. It’s centralization and delegation.”

To avoid legacy issues and potential IP conflicts leading to downtime, it was imperative that the new solution was robust enough for large networks, yet simple enough for everyone to use. Critically, HBPO’s dedication to just-in-sequence production and delivery means the timely precision of production is paramount. The new solution didn’t only have to be reliable, robust and easy to use. It also had to be very, very fast.

Finding the Fast without the Furious

With the nuts and bolts of their search for a solution well-defined, the HBPO Infrastructure Team set about trying out all the major IP Address Management solutions on the market, including Solarwinds, Infoblox, BlueCat, Efficient IP and Microsoft IPAM. After stringent evaluation, HBPO opted to invest in the Men & Mice DNS, DHCP and IP Address Management Suite.

Aside from the Suite's simplicity and ease of use, the team was taken by the very pragmatic Men & Mice Suite overview. At a glance, the information presented in the Men & Mice UI provides comprehensive data on critical network components and clearly displays how resources are being utilized by specific IP numbers. On closer inspection of an IP address range, it's easy to see and control the DHCP reservations and DNS records in a single interface.

Daniel was taken by the superior functionality. "As a system administrator, it's not the aesthetics, but the ergonomics that matter."

Helping All Systems Go - Fast

The Men & Mice Suite significantly changed the way the HBPO Group IT teams view and manage their networks. Battling a lack of documentation, born of distributed locations and legacy networks, had long been one of their bigger, riskier headaches. With the Men & Mice Suite, it's easy for teams to keep address spaces documented, preventing conflicts and boosting network security. Additional safety is provided by the Suite's integrated network discovery scans, eliminating the likelihood of IP collisions caused by human error.

The team was relieved to discover the Suite's advanced level of Microsoft DHCP failover integration. Alerted by the built-in health monitoring system and consistency checks, the IT team was able to identify and deal with inconsistencies in DHCP replication, before it could spin out of control.

The Suite doesn't only improve system health, but also provides the essential functionality for keeping the system clean, both helping to tidy up current documents, as well as do away with undesirable legacy documents. Thanks to the Men & Mice Suite's unrivalled integration with Microsoft Active Directory, there is also now no more need for the team to spend valuable time on regenerating DNS and DHCP databases manually, one at a time.

In an IT world becoming progressively more virtual, Daniel and his colleagues were pleased to see that every time a new virtual machine was deployed, the Suite allowed for a much faster setting of DNS records or IP address reservations. Provisioning entirely new networks also turned into a breeze.

"What used to take quite a long time is now an issue of seconds or minutes. I can create a new network, turn an IP address range into a scope and configure the failover and it's really quick and easy."

First to the Finish

For HBPO Group, the Men & Mice Suite has not only transformed the way they see their networks, but also delivered on the company's need for network administration speed. "Personally, it sped up every workflow regarding DNS and DHCP."

Confident in the stability brought to their IP infrastructure by the Men & Mice Suite and its ease of use, intuitiveness and low maintenance, Daniel expects a smooth IP address management ride for the foreseeable future. **"The Suite doesn't need a lot of consultants and its own teams, it just works."**

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- Daniel Döhring
System Administrator



KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

Globally recognized as experts in the research, training, consulting and software development of DNS, DHCP and IP Address Management products, Men & Mice prides ourselves on offering solutions that adapt to our customers' needs. We don't expect our customers to adapt their needs to suit our solutions.



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