Attractive workplace at SAP – thanks to Office 365

SAP focuses on the wishes of its employees – among other things to stay ahead in the competition for talented candidates. For the digital workplace provided by SAP IT, this means: Always up-to-date, best possible support for cooperation in distributed teams. This standard is perfectly met by the combination of Windows 10 and Office 365. The latter has spread rapidly among the staff.

“Happy employees are the key to corporate success. For SAP’s IT organization this means: To always provide employees with the latest software tools to promote collaboration and to give them as much freedom of choice as possible. The rapid spread of Office 365 within SAP proves that we have hit the jackpot.”

Thomas Saueressig, Chief Information Officer, SAP
Founded in 1972, SAP is the global leader in software and software-related services for enterprise applications with regard to the revenue (total revenue in 2017: nearly €24 billion). Based on market capitalization, SAP is the third largest independent software company in the world. Over 400,000 customers rely on the solutions offered by SAP.

SAP is constantly growing. The software group founded in Walldorf near Heidelberg needs talented employees in order to maintain the rapid pace of further development. And this is exactly the kind of talent that other IT companies are looking for. For years, SAP has focused on employee satisfaction in numerous initiatives. After all, „Happy employees are the key to corporate success,” says Thomas Saueressig, Chief Information Officer at SAP. One of the initiatives revolves around the employees' digital workplace. Clear objective of these efforts driven by the SAP IT organization: To be up-to-date at all times and to be able to offer a modern workplace – and not to restrict colleagues with regard to the place of work. In addition, digital collaboration tools are particularly popular due to the extremely widely distributed workforce: Over 93,000 Group employees work in over 130 countries, with development taking place in more than 100 development centres.

“We have enjoyed working with Microsoft Office for decades and now rely on the cloud-based Office 365 solution. This allows us to work together perfectly across locations.”

Thomas Saueressig, Chief Information Officer, SAP

SAP gives its employees complete freedom of choice when it comes to operating systems, among other things. In addition to Windows machines, computers with Apple macOS account for just over ten percent of the desktop landscape. Those responsible are similarly open-minded regarding the application software provided: Through an extensive software catalogue, the IT department offers every tool desired by the employees, as long as it complies with the Group's security and data protection guidelines. „It’s not up to us to decide which tool is best. Instead, depending on the requirements of the employees or teams concerned, the most suitable tool will prevail,” says Saueressig.

No experiments with Office applications

Increased cross-location cooperation and modern forms of team communication made it necessary...
to modernize the Office applications. Here, too, the IT team wanted to be innovative: "We have enjoyed working with Microsoft Office for decades and now rely on the cloud-based Office 365 solution. It not only promises the same productivity as previous applications, but also improves internal communication," explains Christian Rapberger, Vice President Client IT Services at SAP.

It was therefore a perfect match that the cloud-based Office 365 fulfilled all the wishes of the workforce for modern communication tools. Not least because it runs cross-platform on all common operating systems including Apple macOS. The IT specialists around CIO Saueressig also believe that Office 365 conforms to a wide variety of legal requirements, such as the EU General Data Protection Regulation and the high level of data security. SAP employees most enjoy working together on documents at the same time. "This is a huge advantage for our distributed teams who used to have to exchange new versions of the document via email. This is no longer necessary, especially since Office 365 automatically takes care of document versioning, making the time-consuming search for the latest status a thing of the past," says Rapberger.

In this context, Microsoft Teams (in Office 365) became a hit within a very short time: In the recent past, SAP's way of working has changed away from e-mail, i.e. communication between individuals, to chat-based communication within a team. The cloud-based Microsoft Teams has adopted this exact approach and has quickly become the tool of choice for SAP's sales and marketing teams, among others. "Different sales teams work together on solutions for our customers and can exchange information smoothly in the same channel within Microsoft Teams. All documents relating to the projects can also be found there and can be easily searched," explains Christian Rapberger.

User acceptance: "Viral" level

How well Microsoft Teams was accepted is not only evident in the number of users – 25,000 SAP employees – who became Teams

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Surface Hubs in the Group are more than just a video conferencing solution: They’re the perfect foundation for extensive document collaboration across sites. Saueressig’s IT organization sees the success of the combination in the monthly Skype minutes: More than 97,000 users call for more than 23 million minutes via Skype for Business – per month. Telephone and video conferences even account for 117 million minutes (both figures as of July 2018). The reason for this success is the high quality of the interactive collaboration between the SAP employees that is provided

“Ultimately, the high quality of the Skype for Business and Surface Hub meetings meant that large sections of the workforce were willing and able to do without business trips.”

Christian Rapberger, Vice President Client IT Services, SAP

Newly defined communication

SAP also relies on the combination of Skype for Business, which has replaced all of the company’s traditional phones, and Surface Hub. CIO Saueressig refers to the latter as “Game changer” in connection with Skype for Business: The devices showed SAP employees the full functionality of Skype for Business and made it clear that the more than 280

users in just four months. But also the fact that this figure was achieved without extensive training or major management changes. The tool was obviously so convincing that word-of-mouth alone quickly made Microsoft Teams the most frequently used collaboration tool at SAP. „The integration into our workflows is simply unbeatably good,” states Thomas Saueressig.

The online storage OneDrive spread similarly in a viral way within SAP. From the IT organization’s point of view, OneDrive’s conformity with the EU General Data Protection Regulation was one of the reasons. The IT specialists did not give any instructions to the colleagues to use the application here either. Conversely, SAP also offers its employees other online storage options. „Obviously, it is the high level of user-friendliness that made OneDrive the tool of choice within a very short time. We haven’t seen such a fast and high level of acceptance in the company before,” says Saueressig. And adds: „It is also quite extraordinary that we have received positive feed-

back from the users. Normally, colleagues only report when they want to make improvements.”

Switching to Windows 10 or the Windows-as-a-Service model also brings more peace of mind. The IT organization can prepare upgrades in the background without disturbing the users and then have them installed during the next restart. This means that SAP employees always have the latest version of Windows on their computers. Moreover, thanks to the new update model, a good third of the workforce that does not work in one of the company branches can be supplied with updates without any problems.
by the Surface Hubs: At the end of the meeting, all handwritten changes made to documents on the touch screen of the devices can be sent to all participants as a OneNote document at the touch of a button. In the past, flipchart sheets had to be photographed and the photos would be sent by e-mail. „Ultimately, the high quality of meetings meant that large sections of the workforce were willing and able to forego business trips,” says Thomas Saueressig. Instead, they use their time more productively and avoid long absences from the family – another important aspect in attracting talent. SAP is already planning the full transition from Skype for Business to Microsoft Teams, which integrates all the features of Skype for Business.

**Goal: The intelligent workplace**

Using cloud-based Microsoft solutions, among other things, SAP is working on the workplace of the future or the „Intelligent Enterprise“. In concrete terms, this means supplementing existing techniques with bots, machine learning or analytics. The goal is a digital workplace for users that can react automatically to different situations. For example, if the user is working from home, the workplace may suggest different callback options than on the company campus due to the limited bandwidth. If the mobile device’s bandwidth is not sufficient for a video conference, the system immediately redirects the call to the WLAN-connected notebook.

The fact that users today are already satisfied with the cloud-based services offered by their IT organization can even be measured by those responsible for managing it at SAP: SAP regularly commissions surveys of all users from a renowned international market research institute. The market researchers then compare the results with the results from other companies. For years, SAP ranked among the top 10 of all organizations considered. After switching to the user-centric model with more freedom and cloud solutions, SAP suddenly found themselves in the top 5. „We attribute this significant improvement to giving our users what they want. And this obviously includes cooperation via Microsoft’s cloud services,” says Chief Information Officer Thomas Saueressig.

**Customer**
SAP SE

**Partner**
-

**Products and Services**
Office 365, Skype for Business, Surface Hub, OneDrive for Business, Windows 10, Microsoft Teams

**Industry**
Other

**Organization Size**
Corporation (10,000+ employees)

**Country**
Germany