abilis transforms data center network in one day with Apstra

abilis iT group

Hundreds of manufacturing, industrial process, and other companies rely on abilis Group for their IT services. The managed service provider, based in Germany, specializes in SAP transformation and hosting; business process automation; and product configuration, quote, and pricing software.

abilis automated and modernized its data center network with Juniper Apstra so that it could deliver IT services to its customers more efficiently.

OVERVIEW

Company	abilis Group
Industry	Technology
Products Used	Juniper Apstra, QFX5120, EX2300
Region	EMEA

CUSTOMER SUCCESS AT-A-GLANCE

One

Day to build data center network, including 300 VLANs, with Apstra

60%

Expected network operations time savings due to intent-based networking efficiencies

Shorter

Maintenance windows for network changes

Boost

Network reliability with automation

◐◯ CHALLENGE

Modernize and simplify data center networking

As an innovative, growth-oriented company, abilis wanted to refresh its data center infrastructure for greater business agility and operational efficiency.

"Our data center network was increasingly difficult to maintain," says Christian Kluger, head of IT infrastructure at abilis. "Our goal was to reduce our maintenance windows so that we could meet our customers' needs more easily."

abilis wanted to take a software-defined approach to its data center and began investigating ways to increase agility without the need for CLI and programming expertise.

"We also have a shortage of manpower," says Andreas Knobloch, senior system engineer at abilis. "We needed a solution to support our daily work, such as setting up VLANs and checking switch configurations. Doing that work manually takes time, and there is the possibility of making an error if it's not assisted by software."
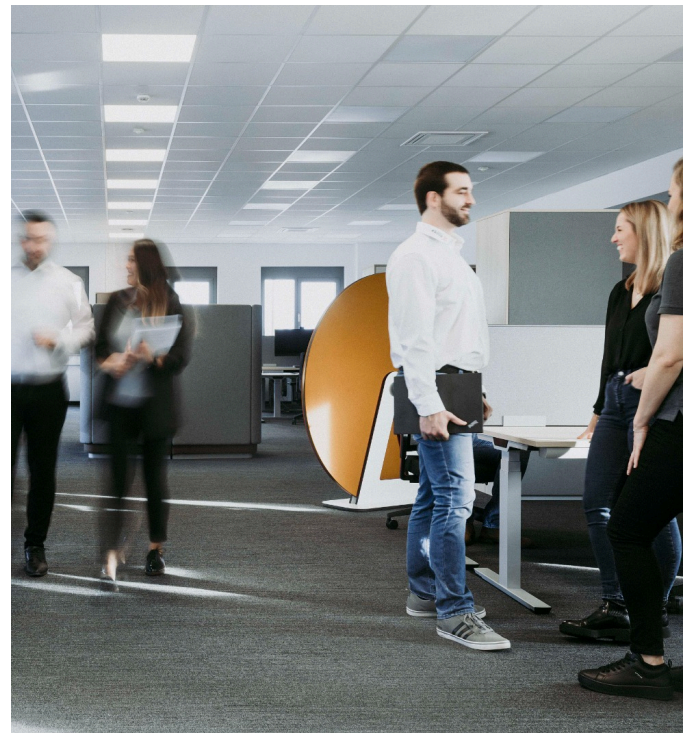
SOLUTION

Intent-based networking delivers value on Day 0

abilis chose Juniper Apstra intent-based network automation software to simplify design, deployment, and operations of its data center network. It also installed Juniper QFX5120 Switches for its IP fabric.

"We set up the Apstra blueprint and configured the network, including 300 VLANs, in a single day," says Kluger. "I was surprised at the speed."

Apstra automated the design and deployment of the spine and leaf switches as well as the EVPN-VXLAN network overlay. Validated templates and zero-touch provisioning dramatically reduced the deployment time from approximately 15 business days down to just 2.5.

"We don't need to know CLI commands," says Knobloch. "We provide the design intention to Apstra, and Apstra sets up the configuration and reports to us if there is a problem during operations."

abilis worked with Nuvias as its channel partner on the data center refresh as well as Juniper Professional Services for the network design and deployment. abilis also uses Juniper AI-driven wired and wireless networking at its newly expanded headquarters.

OUTCOME

A more efficient network saves precious time

A modern, automated data center network allows abilis to more efficiently deliver IT solutions to its customers, including hosted SAP and Microsoft Azure services and its own FlowDOCS business process automation and calcIT configure, price, and quote software.

"With Apstra, we can provision our customers' hosting environments faster and deliver better managed services to our customers," says Kluger.

Apstra provides predictive insights, powerful analytics, and root-cause identification that allow the abilis data center team to quickly pinpoint and resolve issues. Automation and change controls diminish human error and reduce maintenance windows.

"Apstra gives us better insight about overall performance, and when there are issues, we can analyze the problem much faster," says Knobloch.

Apstra has freed up the system engineering team in other ways. "We no longer need a network engineer at the data center site to make changes," says Knobloch.

"We expect that Apstra will reduce our network operations time by 60%."

Christian Kluger
Head of IT Infrastructure, abilis Group