



Fast Facts

- 36,000 associates
- 2,300 branches
- 190 operating companies in 41 countries
- 1,800 employees in Canada spread around 102 offices

www.soneparcanada.com

Industry

Distribution of Electrical Products Services

Products Used

Microsoft Azure



Sonepar Canada

Distributor Mitigates Risks and Increases Agility with the Cloud

Introduction

“By working with Itergy, a Microsoft Certified Partner, since the commencement of our project, we managed to save valuable time searching for and evaluating partners.”

Furthermore, Itergy assisted our team with the completion of our project by providing a highly skilled and knowledgeable resource base. With the help of Itergy, we managed to offer a wide range of informative and educational materials to our internal staff members, which helped them avoid potential mistakes.”

Sylvain Casabon, CIO & VP IT Sonepar Canada

Risking critical business operations is not an option. Due to the lack of an adequate Active Directory environment that was required for testing new software deployment, Sonepar Canada decided to investigate the potential use of a cloud-based solution. After careful and thorough research, Sonepar Canada ultimately chose Microsoft’s cloud platform, Azure.

Recognizing the need for assistance in order to develop and grow its experience, knowledge, and confidence with cloud-based solutions, Sonepar Canada partnered with an industry leader in Azure Active Directory Test/Development Hosted service and support: Itergy International Inc.

Client Background

Sonepar Canada, a member of the Sonepar Group, is an independent, family-owned company with global market leadership in the business-to-business distribution of electrical products and related services. The Sonepar Group is present in more than 41 countries, with approximately 2,300 branches, 190 operating companies, and 36,000 associates. In Canada, Sonepar has over 1,800 employees working out of 102 offices.

The Business Challenges

Strategic acquisitions and organic growth has positioned Sonepar as an industry leader. This rapid business growth, however, has presented a new set of challenges for Sonepar Canada’s IT organization.

Complex Environment

Managing multiple ERP and Workforce Management Systems, along with a large portfolio of applications, also means managing growing complexities. Sonepar Canada’s CIO, Sylvain



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Challenges

- Complex IT requirements
- Insufficient Active Directory test environment
- Limited experience with cloud technology

Solution

Itergy's IT Test/Dev Hosted in the Cloud Services



“We selected Itergy for their expertise, professionalism, and ability to transfer knowledge. That choice has made us successful with our first cloud project and prepared us to take on more.”

Sylvain Casabon, CIO & VP IT
Sonepar Canada

Solution Methodology



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Casabon, wanted to develop a more simplified solution for end users and reduce the excess amount of passwords and IDs. As such, part of the simplification efforts included new software to manage Active Directory (AD) rules and assistance in implementing a single sign-on (SSO) strategy.

Testing Active Directory

Sonepar Canada's networking infrastructure is built on Active Directory. With the growing complexity of the business environment, Sonepar Canada needed to reduce the manual effort required to manage rules and profiles. Consequently, a decision was made to implement a suite of tools to better manage the AD environment.

Testing the tools, however, presented a new set of challenges to Sonepar Canada because of a lack of available system resources needed to create a full test environment.

Running tests on the tools within Sonepar Canada's production AD environment was an option, but not one that Sonepar entertained for long. Sylvain Casabon would not allow a worst-case scenario: employees unable to log on to systems to ship or receive products, and an inability to gain access to productivity software or provide service to customers, thereby potentially grinding business to a halt.

Limited Cloud Experience

Sonepar Canada's CIO investigated cloud testing options, hoping to eliminate the excess time and expense required for creating a separate network and AD environment on-site for testing purposes. However, Sonepar Canada's IT team did not yet have the necessary experience or cloud skills needed to tackle this particular project.

Solution

After months of research, Sonepar Canada determined that Microsoft Azure was the most secure cloud service and therefore best suited for its business needs. Following its decision, Sonepar Canada turned its attention to finding a partner that would best support this initiative. Based on a recommendation from a Microsoft account manager, Sylvain Casabon met with Itergy.

Beginning

Early on, Sylvain Casabon and his team were impressed by the following services offered by Itergy:

- Client references and successful project delivery track record
- Trusted Microsoft partnership and Montreal presence
- Overall expertise, specifically in AD and security
- Alignment in approach to doing business

As a follow-up, Itergy provided the team with an expansive proposal detailing exactly how it would engage with Sonepar Canada, providing Sylvain Casabon and his team with the confidence they needed to move forward with the project.

Progress

To initiate the launch of the project, Itergy sat down with the Sonepar Canada IT team to conduct an "envisioning session" in which the vision, scope requirements, and expectations of the solution were documented. Working collaboratively with assigned resources from Sonepar Canada, the planning phase was started and the architectural solutions and technical specifications were defined, thus creating a high-level implementation plan. Following the initial phase, the Windows Azure Test/Dev environment was configured and running in just a few days. Itergy proactively managed the process to validate the functionality of all components and confirm that the installation went smoothly.

Benefits

- Safeguarded critical systems
- More than two months of setup time saved by selecting a recommended partner and utilizing the cloud
- “Demystified the cloud” with skills and knowledge transfer

Success

As part of the methodology and approach for this project, Itergy simplified the work—down to its most critical elements—and presented the implementation of the solution in an interactive session for Sonepar’s stakeholders. This process simplified the transfer of knowledge and skills to the Sonepar Canada IT team. It also ensured that the team understood how to leverage the benefits of the Active Directory Azure test lab.

Benefits

According to Sylvain Casabon, “Everything happened as planned, with no surprises and no delays. The process was exactly what we hoped for.”

The partnership with Itergy delivered a number of advantages, such as:

- **Safeguarding critical business operations.** Being able to test the software in a safe environment meant that Sonepar Canada managed potential risk factors. It was able to safeguard the uptime of critical systems like ERP, WMS, and productivity suites while deploying the new software. The protocols and efforts behind creating this test environment are now available and accessible for future projects.
- **Increasing agility and time savings.** Sonepar Canada saved weeks of time and energy by embracing Itergy’s approach to the cloud. “By working with a Microsoft-recommended partner, Itergy, we saved weeks of unnecessary research and [having to evaluate] partners and software,” explained Sylvain Casabon. “Itergy’s cost-effective approach and proven methodology meant that our project was subject to a less-demanding approval process. The time required for the initial project and cloud setup was reduced by approximately two months.”
- **Demystified the cloud.** By hiring the best experts externally, Sonepar Canada noticed a quick return on its investment in the form of new skills and knowledge acquired by its IT team. Further benefitting from Itergy’s knowledge of Microsoft and Azure, Sonepar Canada established an Azure agreement that can be leveraged for future projects. Sonepar Canada now has an Azure contract in place, enhanced skills and knowledge, and a strong partner in Itergy. Together, these benefits leave the company well positioned to take advantage of the cloud on a larger scale. Distributed storage, SharePoint, and Office 365 are just a few of the items available to the company within the foreseeable future.

Conclusion

In summary, having partnered with Itergy to successfully deliver its first Microsoft Azure-based project, Sonepar Canada successfully achieved the following goals: confidence in up-to date technology, transferable skills, software knowledge, and growing partnerships.

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