

Consistently paperless

Electronic billing for telephony services streamlines processes and optimises the TCO with lasting effect at Baloise.



From left to right: Dr Manfred Schneider and Jürgen Rohe (Baloise Insurance), Guido Rabel (Swisscom IT Services).

All Baloise Insurance employees in Switzerland use Swisscom when making phone calls. The deciding factor for the insurance company in the choice of provider was the possibility of utilising electronic billing via Swisscom IT Services. Electronic billing offers numerous benefits: many process steps that had to be handled manually in the past have now been automated. Digital processing is reliable and accurate, and it means that long-term savings can be achieved in process costs.

In 2008, Baloise Insurance's telephony landscape was fractured and inefficient. There was no overall contract with a single provider for fixed network services, mobile telephony and data traffic. The setup of the Baloise Group, which is active across Europe, was even more heterogeneous. "The national companies were utilising offers from ten different providers. This resulted in unnecessary organisational and financial expenses", reports Dr Manfred Schneider, Head of Group Procurement, Corporate Center, Baloise. Standardisation was therefore needed.

As early as 2003, Baloise had introduced E-Procurement along with electronic billing. In 2005, the switch to completely paperless billing processes was made by means of electronic signatures. "This enabled us to lower process costs considerably", explains Jürgen Rohe,

Baloise

Baloise Insurance and its retail banking subsidiary Baloise Bank SoBa are among Switzerland's leading providers of integrated solutions for insurance, pension provision and wealth creation. Their customers include private individuals and small to medium-sized companies. The financial institution based in Basel has 3,100 employees and achieved an overall business volume of CHF 3.9 billion in 2009.

«We can map processes electronically, thereby improving the utilisation of internal capacities.»

Dr Manfred Schneider, Head of Group Procurement, Corporate Center, Baloise

member of the Board of Directors, Operations & IT, at Baloise and project leader at the time.

The insurance company then invited tenders for a telephony project with the goal of implementing an E-provider strategy for its branch offices in Switzerland, Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium. Within the scope of this project, a volume of 8.1 million mobile phone minutes, 15.4 million fixed network minutes and 640,000 SMS per year would have to be handled. In doing so, the communication volumes were to be used across all the countries. And the most important requirement was 100% electronic billing.

E-Invoicing instead of “one provider”

The result of the call for tenders showed that a cross-border offer would indeed lower charges and operating costs significantly. “However, the migration would be much more expensive than estimated. Furthermore, the costs for the individual Group companies would have increased”, as Manfred Schneider’s team soon recognised. As a result of these findings, Baloise reset its priorities. Telephony was only to be consolidated at the Group company level, and the contract was to be awarded to the provider with the most efficient TCO (total cost of ownership) structure. They stuck to the mandatory E-Invoicing criterion. However, the TCO goal took priority over low subscription and fee tariffs.

The solution

The best offer for Switzerland came from Swisscom. After all, it has many years of experience with E-Invoicing. Electronic billing has enormous advantages. Many manual process steps – from dispatch to the scanning of invoices right down to archiving – can be eliminated. Digital processing is reliable and accurate and achieves long-term savings for everyone involved. The central interface of Swisscom’s E-Invoicing services is the Conextrade marketplace. Thanks to Conextrade, electronic invoices are already digitally signed when the recipients receive them. Following an initial agreement between the invoice issuer and recipient with regard to the document contents, the invoices are issued completely automatically.

Goal accomplished

E-Invoicing for Baloise’s large number of telephony invoices generates correspondingly large process cost savings. Jürgen Rohe sums up: “The success of the project has shown us that the consistent implementation of E-Invoicing was the right way to go.” All invoicing processes were mapped electronically. That freed up internal resources, which Baloise Procurement can now use for its core activities.

This positive experience with the digitalisation of processes has now resulted in subsequent projects. For example, Baloise is currently looking at implementing an E-portal with E-shop functions throughout Europe.

The benefits at a glance

- **Resource optimisation:** the automation of previously manual processes frees up internal resources for core activities
- **Cost savings:** clear increase in process efficiency and significant cost reductions as a result
- **Legal certainty:** solutions that fulfil compliance requirements, including documentation and auditing
- **No media breaks:** all process steps involved during the issuing and processing of invoices are handled without any media breaks electronically directly into the ERP system
- **State of the art:** solution and operation by an experienced and reliable provider, Swisscom IT Services