

# Akzo Nobel Unifies Worldwide Connectivity With iPass Mobile Office

Company Standardizes and Simplifies Remote Access Across Divisions and Geographies

**The Challenge:** Deploy a hassle-free remote access solution for mobile workers worldwide

**The Solution:** iPass Mobile Office

**The Result:** Dramatically increased the productivity of remote access users while simplifying support, billing and administration



Headquartered in the Netherlands, Akzo Nobel serves customers throughout the world with coatings, chemicals and healthcare products. This Forbes Global 500 company employs 61,500 people in more than 80 countries. Its Coatings Business Units comprise the world's largest paint company with 200 years' experience developing and providing coatings products.

## THE CHALLENGE

Traditionally, each Akzo Nobel business unit was responsible for its own facilities, including information technology. In 1999, Akzo Nobel's Asia Pacific Coatings Unit was tasked with enabling its executive and middle management teams to work remotely. Connecting to the corporate network from the road, in hotels, at home and during visits to satellite offices posed a major challenge for executives as they travelled across the expansive Asia Pacific region.

In 1999 having considered numerous options, the IT team at Akzo Nobel's Asia Pacific Coatings Unit chose an Internet remote access solution built around the iPass Mobile Office service. With iPass, management teams soon received secure, convenient connectivity to the Internet from hundreds of remote locations across the region. Increased connectivity options resulted in significant productivity improvements. Once other units in the Coatings Group discovered this, they also began migrating to iPass. By the end of 2005, the number of users had increased from several hundred to more than two thousand.

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ARIE ROIJMANS

Information Officer, Akzo Nobel Coatings

In early 2006, Akzo Nobel's global senior IT management team initiated a review of the company's global IT and communications infrastructure. Over time, the highly fragmented IT infrastructure, consisting of different systems and services amongst the various business units, had resulted in a high total cost of ownership. Also, having products and services from different vendors made it nearly impossible for Akzo Nobel to efficiently scale its IT infrastructure.

IT services were to be standardised across the company to provide a reliable, scalable solution, with all Internet remote access services to be delivered by a single provider. Compatibility with industry-standard security products, such as VPNs and firewalls, was noted as a prerequisite for remote access. The company issued a request for proposals, but also looked closely at solutions that were already in use within Akzo Nobel business units around the world, and in particular, at those being used by its Coatings Units.





## THE SOLUTION

Akzo's global IT team evaluated a range of options from remote access providers. Following a comprehensive market study and RFP, Akzo narrowed the field to two prospects. Of all the providers that Akzo Nobel considered, iPass had the most extensive global roaming network. The fact that the solution had already been tried and tested by the Coatings Units also stood in its favour. The team had profiled the ease of use and ease of integration of the service as a best-practice example for the rest of the company.

The global IT team and senior management unanimously agreed that iPass Mobile Office was the most suitable solution for Akzo Nobel worldwide and to deploy the iPass service across all its business units and users worldwide. There were two key factors in the group's decision. First, the iPass solution enabled the IT team to avoid time-consuming changes for the existing users. In addition, iPass provided extremely solid global wireless coverage — a capability that was expected to become crucial to Akzo Nobel's global information access strategy.

Akzo Nobel now uses the iPass Mobile Office service as its standard remote access solution worldwide. More than 5,000 employees now have the iPassConnect™ universal client installed on their laptop or desktop at home. "Today, some 3,000 employees use the iPass service every month in more than 80 countries. iPass has helped increase user productivity, simplify administration and reduce support costs," says Arie Roijmans, information officer of the Coatings Unit at Akzo Nobel.

Initially, the iPass solution was targeted at middle and senior management of the Akzo Nobel business units. Subsequently, the company has seen growing demand for the service among its sales force and other employees.

## THE RESULT

While employee demand for the service has increased month over month, Akzo Nobel has actually been able to reduce support costs, explains Arie Roijmans: "The iPass service is incredibly intuitive, which has resulted in a significant reduction

of related helpdesk calls related to mobile connectivity — we've only had 50 support tickets in three years! That is an incredibly low number, especially when taking into account the growing user numbers."

The iPass service has also proven to be easy to manage, while user numbers and demographics have changed considerably. "One of iPass' biggest advantages is its administrative ease. Although Akzo Nobel has chosen a single global solution, each business unit receives a separate monthly invoice. If we wanted to, we could break the costs down to individual user levels," says Roijmans. "iPass has given us unprecedented granularity of reporting on usage and service levels, enabling us to make better-informed plans and strategies for remote and mobile working."

Overall, the Akzo Nobel IT team has been impressed with the speed and ease of implementation of the iPass solution. "We now have a clear roadmap for rolling out roaming connectivity to new users and locations," concludes Roijmans, "and we can start to look into new models such as global shared services, which will help us to continue to reduce costs and improve efficiencies."

## ABOUT IPASS

iPass helps enterprises unify the management of remote and mobile connectivity and devices. With iPass software and services, customers can create easy-to-use broadband solutions for their mobile workers, home offices, and branch and retail locations, complete with device management, security validation and unified billing. iPass offerings are powered by its leading global virtual network, on-demand management platform and award-winning client software. Hundreds of Global 2000 companies rely on iPass services, including General Motors, Nokia and Reuters. Founded in 1996, iPass is headquartered in Redwood Shores, Calif., with offices throughout North America, Europe and Asia. For more information, visit [www.ipass.com](http://www.ipass.com).

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