Praim

Case Study

🌐 **Thin**Man

Fercam S.p.A. evens out the installed devices and minimises the staging time of new ones

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A tangible improvement in the configuration of new workstations and extension of support services affected the qualitative leap in the logistics Group.

Fercam S.p.A. is a family-run logistics operator which works in different fields of transport and logistics with specialised services: Fercam Transport for loads on road and rail, Fercam Air & Ocean for air and sea transport in import and export to and from any port or airport, Fercam Logistics dedicated to managing the supply chain of customers including value added services, Fercam Distribution for shipments and partial 'euronational' loads with a unique quality standard at a European level, as well as with the Gondrand brand for the sector 'removals, exhibitions and fairs' with highly specialised services to businesses and individuals, foundations and museums.

The Group currently employs 1,779 direct and 2,300 indirect employees and ended 2015 with a turnover of over 633 million euros. For the various transport activities it approximately owns 2,850 cargo units and more than 900 thousand square meters of warehouses in 40 new generation logistic centers. Present with 52 subsidiaries in Italy, 22 in Europe and 4 in non-EU territories (Tangier/Morocco, Rades/Tunisia, Istanbul and Izmir/Turkey), Fercam also makes use of an efficient network of correspondents and partners worldwide.

Goal

- improve the speed of deployment, management and standardisation of new workspaces
- reduce technical support time
- improve the management of the entire IT infrastructure

Challenge

- simplify the management of more than 1,300 thin clients in use
- move from a manual management of devices to an "industrial" one
- centrally manage also thin clients with special configurations

Solution

- remote and centralised management through Praim ThinMan console

Results

- reduction of setup time of the new device from 15 minutes to 2 minutes
- improvement of the remote service support
- more efficient management of the IT infrastructure

Improving the management and implementation of workstations

The constant investment in training confirms the importance Fercam gives to the skills and professional development of its employees, as well as the investment in IT. Fercam has always chosen the Citrix world for the delivery strategy of is applications, by centralising in the Bolzano headquarters an important data center virtualized at 98%.

"Over the years, we have gained much experience in this area, above all thanks to the valuable contribution of a leading brand in the industry as Praim. In fact, now we can appreciate not only the quality of the product but also the very high expertise and consulting skills of their specialists who, in collaboration with our staff, have provided over the years the best technical solutions to make the most of our centralised IT", says Manuel Bonazzo, Technical Support Manager at Fercam.

In transport and logistics, but especially for a company that is rapidly growing and widely widespread, everyday challenges are many. Fercam Group felt the need to speed up the implementation of new workstations, as well as their standardisation and management, so as to be able to manage all devices through the support area, and from a single location. The distribution company is in fact one of the main problems in the management of the infrastructure, as the IT department is concentrated in the Bolzano headquarters.

An answer to the more specific configurations

It thus appeared clear the need to use high-quality devices, reliable over time and that could be managed in an Enterprise class. All this without forgetting a fundamental aspect: the cost.

The goal of the Fercam IT department was to simplify as much as possible the management of more than 1,300 thin clients in use. The most important challenge for the Group was to have the ability to create configuration templates to be assigned to device groups, to make changes to multiple devices at once and no longer in a manual way and be able to centrally manage thin client with particular configurations.

The created workstations cover various types within the company: from the ones for administrative staff to those created for the warehouse operators. "Even if the most part of them are standardised workstations, some of them require a specific configuration to support local USB printers for shipping labels and barcode scanners. Hence the differentiation of the workstation type complicates the unified management of the installed devices", explains Bonazzo.

The substance of this fundamental challenge was therefore precisely to pass the preparation and configuration tasks of the new devices from manual to "industrial": *"with Praim solutions we are able to prepare terminals in a few clicks, minimising operator's work and especially bringing the errors to zero ,"*continues Bonazzo.


Improvements... in record time

Fercam was therefore not new to the world of Praim devices. Over the years the Group has used many versions of thin clients, until the last one, the C9200, of which more than 350 devices are in use. But not only. Fercam has also implemented the ThinMan management console, through which it can manage the configuration of the devices and their firmware updates, and especially the shadowing during user support. The use of ThinMan console in Platinum version promoted an important qualitative leap, allowing Fercam to greatly improve its service and reduce costs resulting from staging activities of the devices.

The whole implementation led Fercam to standardise the devices from the configuration side, to minimise the staging times of new devices and to create a standard template to be applied as soon as the device enters the network.

"The results we obtained are very satisfactory. We arrived in concrete terms to the massive resolution of problems with some older versions, as well as the general improvement of performances, due precisely to better firmware and ad hoc configurations suggested and implemented with the valuable specialist support that Praim provides us every day", says Bonazzo.
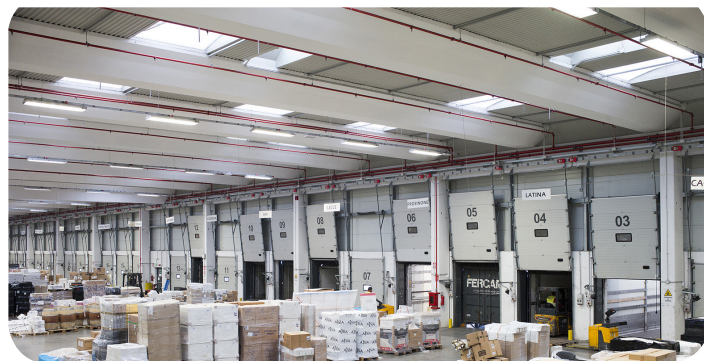
Another tangible aspect of the new implementation by Fercam is the decrease of the time of configuration of new devices that passes from 15 minutes to the 2 minutes record time: the time gained in the workstations preconfiguration phase affected in a significant way the impact of the demands to the IT department.

The remote support feature, meanwhile, was fundamental in extending the service to remote offices that can now receive direct assistance right on the workstation from which operators are working. The support operator, in fact, by connecting directly to the thin client in use by the operator in trouble, can monitor the tasks he is making and intervene directly. The support is therefore not limited to work on failure and problems related to the workstation, but operates a direct intervention on the applications used by the user.

Looking to the future, Fercam foresees a continuous development of automations of configuration and deployment of its workstations. A central role in the overall growth policy implemented by Fercam is played by the improvement of services to the company customers. For this reason Fercam will work on a continuous improvement plan of IT services.