



Eliminating IMACs with Free Seating

The ability to realise organisational changes by reallocating workplaces has emerged as a powerful management instrument. The downside is that Installs, Moves, Adds, Changes (IMACs) have proven to be very expensive.

Modern trading rooms feature a multitude of information sources, enormous computing capacity and high speed connections to computer centres. The efficient management of recurring IMACs remains unresolved to a high degree. Assuming an average of two moves per workplace per year, ongoing IMAC expenses can quickly surpass the procurement price for a trading desk solution. Factors such as non-standardised workplace infrastructure and decentralised computer architecture are particularly cost intensive.

Optimising IMACs

Industry experts have devised three kinds of strategies to optimise IMAC processes.

- Organisational: Outsourcing to specialised service vendors
- Hardware: Quick decoupling of workplace hardware using specialised interfaces (Looming)
- Software: User PCs are virtualised and presented on virtual desktops.

There are real and potential drawbacks with all three approaches, such as procedural redundancies, reduced flexibility or inflated infrastructure requirements.

Free Seating

There is another way: Free Seating means that traders can sit anywhere and access all their sources. IMACs become a thing of the past. This is made possible by standardising workplace infrastructure and information re-routing, both of which guarantee the highest levels of flexibility.

Physical re-routing of workstation interfaces over a switch matrix is the leading approach when it comes to latency-free presentation of systems, even incompatible ones. An advantage of this video or information switching technology is that every workplace is assigned a dedicated information channel, enabling higher data throughput rates than with network based systems.

Fibre Installations

This technology is now also available using fibre optics. Thanks to optical multiplexing and the unlimited bandwidth of optical fibre, such systems are extremely compact, efficient and very adaptable for the future. The fibre-based cabling provides superior data consistency and requires only a fraction of the space compared to conventional solutions. Energy used for transmission is reduced by up to 80% — with an obvious reduction of the CO₂ balance.

With a consistent implementation of a carefully conceived Free Seating concept, the costs and inconveniences of IMACs belong to the past.