



CUSTOMER REFERENCE

Steiff

Steiff optimizes its global communication and makes sales & marketing more flexible



For many years, Steiff – the inventor of the teddy bear – deployed a container solution that did not cover all demands sufficiently. It was not until Steiff switched to SecurePIM that the company was able to achieve its goal of encrypting and reliably synchronizing data on private and company-owned smartphones.



Based in the town of Giengen in Baden-Wuerttemberg, Margarete Steiff GmbH is the world's most famous manufacturer of toys and stuffed animals and has garnered a reputation over the last 135 years for meeting the highest quality and safety standards, its superb design, and the use of excellent materials. When Margarete Steiff invented her first baby elephant in 1880 (originally designed as a pincushion!) and watched it advance to become a favorite toy, she quickly realized how important it was to give children high-quality toys with thoughtful designs. Her guiding principle was 'For children only the best will do.' This has become the company's mission statement. Founded in 1880, Steiff now has around 1,700 employees.

The Challenge

Employees at Margarete Steiff GmbH repeatedly voiced their desire to access company data – particularly emails and appointments – when out of the office. Up to this point, it was theoretically possible to access such information via notebooks, but the process was inconvenient. Even if they only wanted to check their emails quickly, employees had to open their notebooks and search for a Wi-Fi connection – that was not always available. Interruptions to the workflow were extremely common and time was not being used efficiently.

The answer was obvious – the company required a solution that would enable employees to call up company data on their smartphones. This would make the workflow more convenient and considerably faster.

In principle, it was a simple step when it came to company-owned smartphones. But how could Steiff make the required data available to the ten or so employees who used their own personal smartphones?

Keeping company and private data separate was not the question, of course – not merely to ensure the future of the company's BYOD policy, but also to comply with data protection regulations.

The process also relied on support from Steiff's work council, particularly with regard to IT controls on private data. As a result, native iOS and Android solutions were considered unsuitable.

In order to check off all the necessary boxes, Steiff's IT decided to establish a safe container solution for smartphones in 2013.

This contained encrypted company data that was neatly separated from the BYOD user's private information.

The idea was excellent in theory but frustrating in practice due to issues with data synchronization. ‘In practice, deadlines and appointments did not always show up and sometimes disappeared entirely from mobile devices,’ explains Thomas Lutzmann, IT system administrator for Steiff. Contact details and emails were also not always updated properly. This solution made it impossible to work in a professional manner. In particular, Steiff’s sales reps – who travel the world and especially the USA – depend heavily on reliable calendar entries.

Why Steiff chose SecurePIM

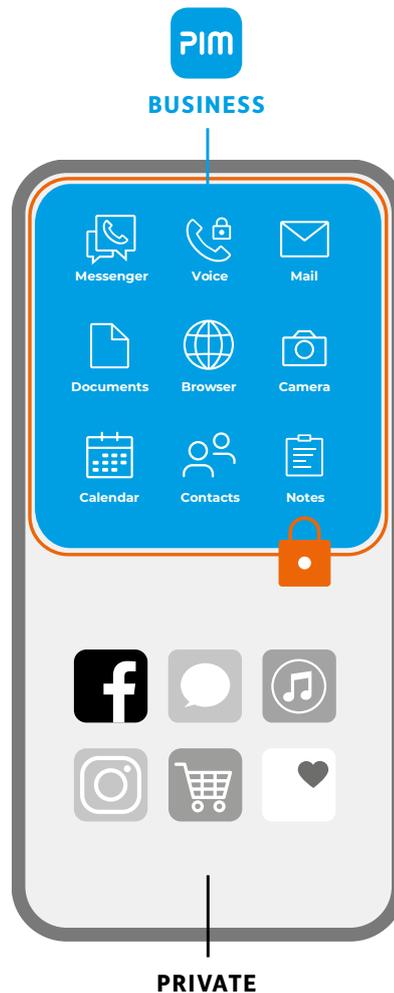
- + High level of security – Made in Germany
- + Approved by data protection officers and the works council. High level of security and control, but not at the expense of the user
- + Swift integration in the existing infrastructure
- + Short rollout phase
- + Intuitive use, minimal amount of training required, high level of acceptance by employees
- + Secure, international use of sensitive company data

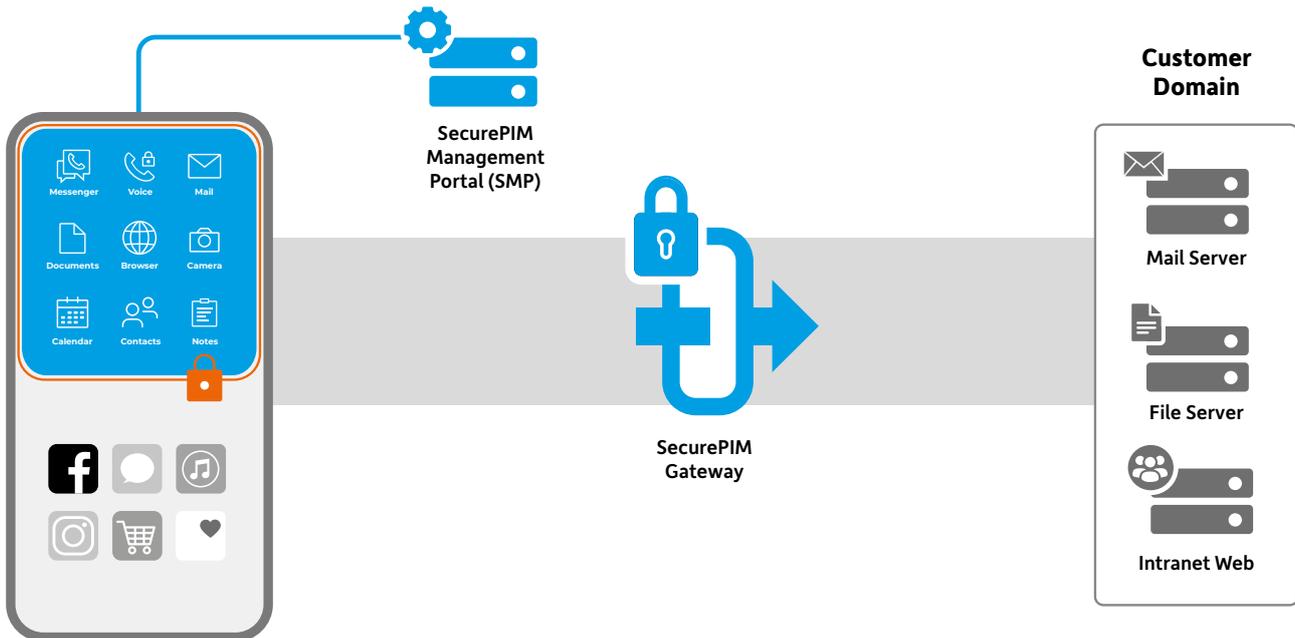
The solution

IT began to search for a new container solution. After researching the market, they opted for Virtual Solution.

SecurePIM by Virtual Solution is a secure container solution for iOS and Android.

It covers classic Office features such as calendar, email, contacts, and filesharing as well as a hardened browser for accessing internal company documents. All data is fully encrypted, meaning it is protected on its way from the company to the mobile device and vice versa. Users can neither copy any of the data in SecurePIM to manually paste it into other apps, nor can other apps directly access the content of the container.





Implementation

Impressed by the technical details, Steiff was ready to begin with the pilot phase. The company’s IT department was supported by their IT partner in Fürth, **SOFTWERK**.

During the extensive pilot phase, feedback from those involved was unanimously positive. The app was found to be ‘stable and reliable’, and ‘nice and easy to use’.

Hence IT decided to roll out the new solution company-wide. During the summer of 2019, SecurePIM was installed on the devices of 90 users as planned. Today, the container solution is installed on 60 iOS and 30 Android smartphones; roughly 80 of these are company property, while 10 are privately owned.

Thanks to the fact that Steiff had gained experience with the previous service provider’s container solution, the rollout was uncomplicated. ‘Once the app was installed via MDM on the devices, we were able to help colleagues ourselves,’ explains Lutzmann. ‘IT gave them instructions, explained the new features and answered any questions they had.’ Steiff uses a Domino server; a virtual instance of the IBM Traveler Server was added in order to synchronize data with mobile devices. IT partner Softwerk took care of all the other tasks involved in the project. ‘Our internal workload was very manageable,’ summarizes Lutzmann.

Steiff uses the SecurePIM Management Portal for managing users and security configurations. In addition to this, the company also deploys an MDM solution from Sophos.

Steiff uses SecurePIM in virtually all business areas within the company – from IT, sales & marketing, field work, and management to production and logistics. It is used not only by managers and team leaders, but also by employees for specific tasks. All who use it have confirmed that it enables them to work much faster than the previous solution. Before deciding on SecurePIM, Steiff’s data protection officer and works council scrutinized the solution carefully. It met with unequivocal approval and was given the green light.

The fact that SecurePIM is a German product was the icing on the cake.

Equally, the fact that the solution is approved by the BSI (Germany’s Federal Office for Information Security) and complies fully with the GDPR also played a role in the decision-making process. For the works council, one of the decisive factors in favor of the solution was the option to restrict the synchronization of emails to certain time frames so that employees no longer receive emails after 6 pm or on weekends. ‘We’re considering activating this feature at some stage in the future,’ says Lutzmann.



The Outlook

SecurePIM has convincing advantages:

users at Steiff confirm that it is very user-friendly, and that the solution enables them to work faster. For Lutzmann, these are two very good reasons for pushing ahead with implementation in more areas of the company.

Ultimately, the aim is to install the solution on 150 end devices.

SecurePIM now enables employees in sales & marketing to respond swiftly and flexibly when appointments and deadlines are moved.

And what could be more important in sales & marketing than to interact flexibly with customers and potential customers?



About Virtual Solution

Virtual Solution, a Materna Group company, is a software vendor specializing in secure mobile applications, with its headquarters in Munich and a development office in Berlin.

The company develops and markets the SecurePIM and SecureCOM applications, as well as the SERA security architecture for iOS and Android. SecurePIM enables mobile working which is both encrypted and user-friendly. Authorities are able to communicate using smartphones and tablets, while maintaining the levels of confidentiality required for information which is categorized as Classified /VS-NfD and communicate at the security level NATO RESTRICTED.

For companies, SecurePIM ensures compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) when working from mobile devices, reducing the risk of committing GDPR violations and the loss of company data.

Virtual Solution was founded in 1996 and employs a staff of around 90 people. All products offered by Virtual Solution bear the trust mark »IT Security made in Germany« awarded by the TeleTrust IT Security Association, founded to promote trust in information and communication technology in Germany.

Virtual Solution

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