

# Lync 2013 Customer Solution Case Study



## Apparel Manufacturer Accelerates Business with Cloud Solution



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Sandy Abrahams, IT Director, Helly Hansen

### Overview

**Country or Region:** Norway

**Industry:** Retail—Outdoor apparel

### Customer Profile

Helly Hansen designs high-performance outdoor gear. Headquartered in Oslo, Norway, it employs more than 350 people.

### Business Situation

Helly Hansen had an outdated IT infrastructure that was not meeting the needs of employees. There was a lack of collaboration tools that resulted in many email messages, frequent business trips, and expensive phone calls.

### Solution

Helly Hansen deployed the Microsoft Office 365 hosted communications and collaboration solution. It is now deploying Microsoft Lync Server 2013 to gain enterprise voice and advanced conferencing capabilities.

### Benefits

- Speeds communications
- Reduces travel budgets 10 to 15 percent
- Reduces mobile phone costs 10 percent
- Eases licensing
- Improves contact center operations

Helly Hansen is known for its innovative blend of technology and design to produce high-performance outdoor gear. However, it was not providing innovative communications capabilities to employees. It was relying on outdated, unreliable email and telephony systems. To revitalize its IT capabilities, Helly Hansen adopted Microsoft Office 365, licensing the E4 plan, which provides access to hosted communication and collaboration solutions. By using the capabilities in Microsoft Lync Online, lengthy email messages, business trips, and mobile phone calls will be primarily replaced by instant messaging, online meetings, and voice over IP calls. Helly Hansen accelerated business processes and reduced travel costs by 10 to 15 percent and mobile call charges by more than 10 percent. It has recently deployed Microsoft Lync Server 2013 to supplement Office 365 with enterprise voice capabilities.



## Situation

Helly Hansen produces outdoor gear that can keep you comfortable on the water, at the top of a mountain, or anywhere in between. Popular among skiers and sailors for both work and play, the Helly Hansen clothing line is known for its innovative fabrics, durability, performance, and Scandinavian design.

As a globally recognized brand, Helly Hansen works with retailers and suppliers from around the world. It does so with only slightly more than 350 employees who work out of the headquarters in Oslo, Norway, and from offices in Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, China, Canada, and the United States.

Prior to 2011, IT operations at Helly Hansen were less tightly controlled and governed. New systems were installed but the old systems were quite often not decommissioned. For example, the company was running 11 instances of Microsoft Exchange Server. Some of the servers still ran the Windows 2000 operating system and Microsoft Exchange Server 2003.

Most teams at Helly Hansen are geographically diverse; for instance, the Finance department has people who work from all of the offices. The teams typically communicate by email and phone, but the phone systems were outdated and unreliable. Customers and suppliers could not always connect to the Oslo office due to phone system outages. Helly Hansen had a videoconferencing

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system in Oslo and the other major sites, but it was complex and rarely used. Because communications options were limited, travel for meetings between offices and manufacturers in Europe and Asia were common.

In January 2011, Helly Hansen hired

Sandy Abrahams as the new IT Director. “We had PBX [private-branch exchange] systems, email, and a videoconferencing system and they were all unreliable,” says Abrahams. “There was no instant messaging and no conferencing. We needed to do something fast so that communication was not an impediment to our business.”

Abrahams quickly moved to centralize IT and rationalize its IT systems and business application portfolio. Helly Hansen began to centralize the Exchange Server environment and retire the outdated systems. They also installed Skype as a quick way to provide instant messaging (IM) and conferencing. Abrahams learned about Microsoft Lync Server 2010 from her Microsoft

account manager. She thought it would be a great solution to provide the IM, conferencing, and voice over IP (VoIP) telephony that Helly Hansen needed to improve its communications processes.

Helly Hansen decided to test Microsoft Office 365 instead of deploying Lync Server on-premises. Office 365 unites familiar Microsoft Office applications with the power of Microsoft Exchange Online, Microsoft SharePoint Online, and Microsoft Lync Online into one connected, online solution. “With my team of five people trying to manage 40 applications, we thought it was great to be able to outsource email and not have to manage Lync onsite,” says Abrahams. “We would have deployed Office 365 just for Exchange Online, but we also got instant messaging and conferencing along with SharePoint Online.”

## Solution

Helly Hansen started by moving 25 employees to Office 365 as part of a small pilot program. It was easy to implement, and the employees loved the new communications capabilities. “Lync Online was in high demand. We had people queuing up to get it,” says Abrahams. With a small team rolling out Office 365 while working on the service desk, the majority of the 350 employees had been transitioned to the cloud in a relatively short period of time.

The teams at Helly Hansen quickly adopted the communications and collaboration capabilities in Lync Online and were hosting frequent desktop sharing sessions. “We ran a development project at the beginning of the year with contributors from Germany, Denmark, Sweden, the United States, and Norway entirely on Lync. The only time they came to Oslo was for final acceptance testing,” says Abrahams. “We used Lync meetings and desktop sharing and set up a team site in SharePoint Online to manage the project. The great thing was that everybody on the team felt that the process worked and our management heard that message.”

To take full advantage of Lync Online, Helly Hansen distributed phones and headsets for employees to use during their Lync calls. The company tested Sennheiser DW Pro models, which worked perfectly for its finance staff. It also tested Plantronics Calisto P540-M USB phones and decided to give one to each manager with an office. “We feel that it is important for everyone to have a Lync-certified endpoint to make their experience as good as possible, and as simple as possible,” says Abrahams. “We really appreciate the variety of devices that we can use with Lync.”

For videoconferencing, Helly Hansen invested in a Polycom CX5000 panoramic videoconferencing unit for a meeting room, along with a big-screen television to display the remote participants. Helly Hansen then shipped Logitech B910 HD web cameras to the other offices, which can be used from employees’ desks or in conference rooms.

While adoption of Lync Online grew between April and September of 2012, the PBX system in Oslo was causing serious problems. Internal communications switched to Lync, but customers and suppliers were having trouble connecting with the office.

Helly Hansen decided it needed enterprise voice capabilities and began a pilot program of Microsoft Lync Server 2013, which replaced Lync Online but was still licensed through the Microsoft Office 365 E4 plan. With the help of Microsoft partner Atea, Helly Hansen set up the servers in its Oslo data center and is upgrading the networking connections to its offices and the wireless networks within the offices to handle VoIP calls. Helly Hansen will also deploy audio conferencing bridges so that every country it works with will have local dial-in numbers.

By deploying Lync Server 2013, Helly Hansen will be able to improve communications that go beyond voice. "We are looking forward to taking advantage of the video gallery and the full panorama view from our Polycom CX5000," says Abrahams. The gallery view enables employees to see up to five video streams so that they can see the reactions of their colleagues, identify the active speaker, and associate names with faces.

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to install the plug-in to run the application, making it easy for anyone to join a meeting. Lync Web App also delivers voice and video over the Internet, so external participants can experience the full range of Lync functionality.

In preparation for the Lync deployment, Helly Hansen implemented the Zeacom contact center solution for its call center agents in Oslo and Munich. The Zeacom solution is currently connected to the existing PBX system in Oslo but will be migrated to Lync once it is in production. "The Zeacom solution has already impressed everybody with its queuing, routing, reporting capabilities, and simplicity to administer. Once it's running on Lync, employees will get the presence, instant messaging, and all of the other Lync functionality that they need," says Abrahams.

Helly Hansen is also looking forward to the Skype federation enabled with Lync 2013. "Skype will be a good communications channel between our business and our smaller partners." While Skype will enable quick chats and voice calls, the changes to the Microsoft Lync Web App will also help to simplify meetings with external partners. Administrator rights are no longer needed

In addition, Helly Hansen has moved its employees to Exchange Online and they now enjoy fast and reliable email service. Exchange Online provides 25-gigabyte mailboxes for employees, so they no longer have to spend time managing their mailbox. The reliability of the mail service has also increased; employees no longer experience frequent mail outages due to a problem in one of the 11 mail servers. The company is using SharePoint Online for team collaboration. Lync presence information is available to employees while they are using Outlook and SharePoint Online.

## Benefits

Helly Hansen employees have seen a lot of changes from their IT department in the past two years. None of these changes are more important to the operations of the company than the adoption of Office 365 and specifically Lync, which has changed the way Helly Hansen employees work together.

### Speeds Communications

Before Helly Hansen deployed Lync Online, employees communicated primarily through email, but it was slow and employees couldn't be sure when or if the recipient would read the message, or if the message was even delivered. "One of the most important things we have done is reduce our dependence on email," says Abrahams. "Now we don't have to spend 30 minutes carefully composing an email and getting a response the next day. We can spend 10 seconds on a quick IM and get a reply instantly." Instant messaging speeds interactions between employees and presence ensures that the recipient is available.

### Transforms the Travel Culture

Soon after the move to Office 365, Helly Hansen started a pilot program to encourage employees to replace business travel with Lync meetings. "We ran this pilot and, in a very short time, were able to avoid 15 trips and save more than €15,500 [US\$20,000]. Lync quickly made a real improvement in how we do business," says Abrahams.

Now every manager has been told to reduce their travel budget and use Lync instead. Helly Hansen expects travel costs will be reduced by 10 to 15 percent in 2013. While the senior management was initially skeptical that Lync could help reduce travel costs, it is now convinced that Lync can deliver savings.

One way that Helly Hansen will be benefiting from Lync videoconferencing is by reviewing clothing samples with its manufacturers in Hong Kong. "Our suppliers can use the Logitech high-definition cameras to show samples to the developers in Oslo. We currently send an entourage of people to Asia to check samples every year. Now, only half of the team will need to go," says Abrahams. "Everybody is excited about this; the people who are tired of so much traveling and the managers who want to save money."

### **Reduces Telephony Costs**

Helly Hansen will use Lync to replace the outdated PBX equipment, which will reduce the cost of maintenance and greatly improve the reliability of telephone communications. Lync will also help Helly Hansen to reduce its mobile phone charges. "We have one employee who frequently travels between Munich and Oslo. He saw a reduction in his mobile phone bill of more than €200 [US\$260] a month after adopting Lync," says Abrahams. "That is the savings from just one person." Overall, Helly Hansen has reduced the budget for mobile phone costs by 10 percent.

### **Eases Licensing**

The entire Microsoft communication and collaboration solution can be licensed under the Microsoft Office 365 E4 plan. One low monthly cost per user provides access to Exchange Online, SharePoint Online, Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus, and Lync Server 2013 for a full on-premises voice deployment.

### **Improves the Call Center**

The Zeacom contact center solution, which will run on top of Lync Server 2013, will change the way Helly Hansen operates its call centers. "We will be able to divert calls between Munich and Oslo to speed response times. We will also be able to have our agents work from home, or from any location," says Abrahams. The information provided by the Zeacom solution will help ensure that Helly Hansen call center agents are being used productively.

Office 365, and specifically Lync, has helped to change the culture at Helly Hansen from one that avoided any new technology to one that embraces new ways of communicating and collaborating. "We now have many people who could not live without Lync," says Abrahams. "We've improved our communications and succeeded in reducing travel budgets by 10 to 15 percent and mobile phone budgets by more than 50 percent for remote workers. It has been a great success." Helly Hansen is looking forward to deploying the enterprise voice capabilities so that it can gain even more from Lync.

## Microsoft Lync Server 2013

Microsoft Lync Server 2013 ushers in a new connected user experience that transforms every communication into an interaction that is more collaborative and engaging—and that is accessible from anywhere. For IT, the benefits are equally powerful, with a highly secure and reliable communications system that works with existing tools and systems for easier management, lower cost of ownership, smoother deployment and migration, and greater choice and flexibility.

For more information about Microsoft Lync Server 2013, go to: [www.microsoft.com/lync](http://www.microsoft.com/lync)

## Logitech

Logitech delivers the advanced, business-grade audio and video performance needed for a superior video calling experience. Logitech webcams and video calling solutions are designed especially for business, with the highest quality optics and sensors across all price points.

For more information about Logitech devices tested and qualified for Lync, visit: [www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)

## Plantronics

Plantronics enables a superior user experience for Microsoft Lync with audio endpoints that work across platforms, applications, and devices - and developers tools to connect Lync communications to critical business applications. Customers turn to Plantronics for audio devices that continue to bring technology and people together.

For more information about Plantronics devices tested and qualified for Lync, visit: [www.plantronics.com/microsoft](http://www.plantronics.com/microsoft)

## Sennheiser

Sennheiser manufactures high-quality headphones, microphones, wireless transmission systems, and headsets for business. Sennheiser business headsets represent sound quality, design, wearing comfort, and hearing protection at their best.

For more information about Sennheiser devices tested and qualified for Lync, visit: [www.sennheiser.com](http://www.sennheiser.com)

### Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
  - Microsoft Lync Server 2013
- Microsoft Office 365
  - Microsoft Lync Online
  - Microsoft Exchange Online
  - Microsoft SharePoint Online
  - Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus

### Third-Party Software

- Zeacom Communications Center

### Partners

- Atea
- Zeacom
- Logitech
- Plantronics
- Sennheiser



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2. For more information about Helly Hansen products visit the website at: [www.hellyhansen.com](http://www.hellyhansen.com)

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