



INTERVIEW MIT  
MARCO MARCHESI,  
CEO VON ISPIN

# Volle Sicht auf die Sicherheit

KMU - SERVER  
IM VERGLEICH  
VIER KERNE FÜR KLEINE  
UND MITTLERE FIRMEN

UNBESORGT  
VERSORGT  
UNTERBRECHUNGSFREIE  
STROMVERSORGUNGEN

DIE SOZIALEN  
IT-NETZE  
EIN BELIEBTER TUMMEL  
PLATZ FÜR HACKER



# Keeping security

Ispin, the IT security company from Bassersdorf Switzerland, have not only doubled in size over the past 12 months but also opened an office in Dubai. In our interview, CEO Marco Marchesi talks about his company's strategic plans and current trends in the security sector.

**I**n the last 12 months, the number of your company's employees has almost doubled. How did you accomplish that? After all, it is said that the security hype has transcended its peak. Were you able to attract new customer projects?

by  
Karlheinz Pichler  
(interview) and  
Tanya Hasler  
(photography)

It is true, we have indeed experienced substantial growth. We have chosen a deliberate growth strategy by developing the basis-organization and making considerable investments at the right time. It is therefore only logical that our company has attracted a proportionate amount of attention on the market. Times are good, and we provide a wide range of products for virtually any security requirements. During the last 12 months, we have not only doubled the number of our employees but also the size of our business volume. Companies should regard security as a life cycle. As this is becoming standard practice, we support our clients in their issues of technology, organization, law and where people are concerned. Of course, we have also outdone well-known competitors by gaining some large customer projects. This, however, we regard as business as usual.

**\_\_\_ How many clients does Ispin currently provide services for?**

Well, this is a question we keep asking ourselves, too. We are currently experiencing an continuous inflow of new clients. However, our main concern is the development of long-term partnerships with our clients. Currently, we have approximately 140 clients

from all over Switzerland and from virtually all business sectors. For a small company like ours this is a real challenge. Every day.

**\_\_\_ You keep emphasizing the holistic perspective of your security solutions. In what way are you different from other providers?**

In our strategy, we deliberately enhance some key points. For instance, we develop solutions with our clients which contain an «Actual and Target» security strategy modulated in an active and anticipatory manner. In order to provide these solutions, we have to highlight current and future security requirements. We are successful because we consider security in a comprehensive holistic way. At the same time, we provide specific selective solutions. Another reason is that we consider the four aspects «organization, governance, technology and people» at all levels. Therefore, our position, i.e. that of a provider of overall solutions for information and IT security with data protection, is an essential advantage over possible competitors.

**\_\_\_ Last year, you succeeded in landing an, for Switzerland, exclusive security partnership in the storage sector with the storage giant EMC. Has this cooperation borne any harvestable fruits?**

Large organizations are often said to be slow in the market. This, however, does not apply to EMC. The company displays a similar agility world-wide as

Swiss made Security.

# in view

«We look at security holistically.»

ISPIN does in Switzerland. For Switzerland, we consider the cooperation as strategic, and our joint approach has already been successful in some accounts. It is vital that EMC's officers also focus on the solution and attach an equal amount of significance to security. Of course, in terms of a win-win situation, we are aware that EMC profits from our competence in security. For our clients, however, the integrated solution is the most interesting part.

**\_\_\_ Will your company be able to continue its growth at this level? What are your targets in this regard?**

For us, growing at this level appears to be right thing. This does not, however, mean that we will continue to realize the same growth rates. As a specialist company, we currently employ 40 staff and have more key personnel than the largest ICT manufacturers. In the near future, we are going to undertake some large projects, which means that we are going to require further suitable security specialists for our team. As a small or medium sized company we have to acquire the investment capital first. We also, attach great importance to in-company growth. That means that these projects have to be approached with the same priority as the actual market development itself. A heal-

thy and stable organizational structure is the basis for our further growth. Our clients agree.

**\_\_\_ A short time ago, Ispin communicated the founding of an office in Dubai. What inspired you to commence operations in this area?**

Being a Swiss company, we wanted to make use of our image to sell security abroad. When we researched the market, we found that our portfolio is eminently suited to clients in the Middle East. Thanks to our consulting skills as well as our technological know-how, we can develop custom-made solutions. The principal office of «IspinMEA» is located – nomen est omen – directly in Dubai Silicon Oasis (DSO), the Silicon Valley of the Middle East, a business park that consolidates the most important ICT companies under one roof. We want to work the entire Arab economic area with «Swiss Made Security» and focus on «Solutions with Swiss Made Quality».

**\_\_\_ The IT market suffers from a dramatic lack of specialists. What is the situation like in the security sector? As a growing company you depend on good employees. Where do you find them?**

First and foremost, we cultivate an open company culture. The fact that our fluctuation rate is low con-



## PERSONAL DETAILS

Marco Marchesi has degrees in Engineering, Business and Electrical Engineering HTL. He is a specialist in the areas of Information Security Management, Information Security Culture, Emergency Prevention Planning and Risk Management. In 1999 he founded Ispin AG in Bassersdorf, Switzerland with three partners. Before that, he was employed by Conexus as a consultant as well as by Diagonal Systems as an application and network engineer. In 2001, Marchesi and colleagues founded the Swiss Chapter of the International Security Organization ISSA (Information Systems Security Association), as the president of which he brings the international training CISSP to the German speaking world. The Ispin CEO is also a member of the board of Infosurance as well as of the Swiss Data Protection Forum. When he has time, he pursues his hobbies golf and motor biking.

## COMPANY DETAILS

Ispin AG, founded 1999 in Bassersdorf near Zurich, is internationally oriented and specializes in information security of «Swiss Made Quality». The company has offices in Zurich, Bern and Dubai and provides specific solutions with a holistic perspective. Ispin cultivates its own brands, develops individual software and operates in close cooperation with international technology leaders and project partners.

firms the strategy of a «lived service management». Although we also work with recruiting companies, we are much sought after by new employees from the free market. Security specialists are difficult to find. However, our engagement in trade associations and business sector organizations has resulted in a strong network of experienced security specialists.

**\_\_\_ The first half of the year is almost over. If you had to draw a preliminary balance: What security topics are most in demand this year? What focal points result from this for your company?**

We have to distinguish between hype topics and the real business requirements of the market. Currently, «classic» architecture topics are top of the list while IAM (Identity und Access Management), SIEM (Security Information & Event Management) also seem to be in increasing demand closely followed by ISO certificates, specialist training and governance topics where liability and responsibility have to be pointed out, clarified and defined. More current events, particularly in the banking world indicate future trends such as fraud management, data base encryption and source protection, a concern we have been voicing for years.

**\_\_\_ Ispin is known as a security service provider. The services you offer include IT and Business Continuity Management. An international survey conducted by Symantec concludes that IT risks are no longer necessarily equated with security risks. According to the study, companies, by now, regard the areas of security, availability, compliance and performance as equal pillars of a comprehensive IT risk management. Do you agree with this reassessment where Swiss companies are concerned? What is a security provider's perspective on how these areas interlock?**

This is definitely our opinion as well. We have been speaking of various perspectives of security for years. Specifically, we provide solutions for information security, IT security and data protection. In addition to this, security has to be understood as a process and risk assessment must include the corporate business. This means that aspects of technology, organization and governance, as well as people have to be included.

**\_\_\_ In this connection, what is the significance of disaster recovery and business continuity strategies? Could you give Swiss users some specific tips?**



Topics such as IAM (Identity and Access Management) and SIEM (Security Information & Event Management) are in increasing demand

Marco Marchesi

«We want to work the entire Arab economic area with Swiss made security».

Where our concepts and projects have been realized, we detect an increase in equanimity towards possible breakdowns, complicated events or even disasters. We often see that only the disaster recovery part is executed and that the actual crisis concept, training and awareness are neglected. We can only speak of prevention if real business continuity management is carried out. Procedures for crisis situations have been planned and dealing with events has actually become easier even though it is still difficult enough. In any case, crises are always inconvenient. The law makes the management responsible and also liable. The legal situation is very clear although at times a little complicated. There are the stock corporation law, the Data Protection Act, a banking law, the insurance law, the Swiss Code of Obligations as a basis, then the Swiss Federal Banking Commission, Basel II, the ISO norms and often an internal monitoring system and also PAS 56. Awareness of this responsibility has increased in recent years. BCM projects are increasingly in demand. However, they may not be limited to individual aspects like disaster recovery but have to be considered across the entire business processes. It is always sensible and useful if these topics are supported by a valid standard. In the case of BCM, this may be PAS 56.

\_\_\_ On a security level, the protection of web platforms is becoming increasingly more significant since more and more business relevant applications are relocated to the web. Can you confirm this trend? Or do you locate another security hype?

Data exchange platforms are an issue but no hype topic. They rather correspond to the growing need for simpler and more secure information and data exchange throughout company networks. Day-to-day data exchange includes, for instance, reporting, project documentation and all possible types of information from business partners like suppliers. Encrypted transmission and access control are only two of the security relevant aspects. Protecting web platforms is generally complex and has to be approached with careful foresight.

\_\_\_ Where will IspIn stand in the medium term, that is in two to three years?

Well, we will certainly not stand still. Today, we are optimally positioned in the market but, of course, there is potential for improvement here and there. We are aware of this and will use the good times to improve and adapt our performance as well as the quality of our internal processes. In Switzerland we will emphasize our regionality, where it makes sense, that is where our clients are. We will still plan the future strategically and consistently implement our targets. We will therefore be thinking about strategy and suitable organization as well as our management system. The only thing that will also count in the future are our satisfied clients, since they ensure our continuity. On the technological level, we want to face hypes in a discriminating and constructive manner and, if they benefit the business processes of our customers, we will integrate them selectively into our portfolio. We also want to analyze and understand foreign markets and countries in order to be ready to react if necessary. □

