

THE GREAT STANDARDISATION INITIATIVE

Retail company uses Dell solution to reduce server numbers from 60 to 6 and simplify expansion



A heterogeneous IT infrastructure can create complexity and high running costs. Mergers and acquisitions are particularly challenging if existing IT systems are disparate. For expanding companies, a scalable, uniform environment poses considerable benefits.

SOLUTIONS:

- BACKUP, RECOVERY AND ARCHIVING
- DATABASE
- VIRTUALIZATION

Einhell®

CUSTOMER PROFILE

COMPANY: Einhell Germany AG
INDUSTRY: Retail and wholesale
COUNTRY: Germany
FOUNDED: 1964
EMPLOYEES: 1,000
WEBSITE: www.einhell.com

CHALLENGE

Einhell Germany wanted to standardise the IT infrastructure across its 35 subsidiaries to simplify the integration of new offices and reduce the complexity of system maintenance.

SOLUTION

The company implemented a solution at its head office based on Dell™ PowerEdge™ servers, Dell/EMC storage solutions and virtualization software. Server numbers have fallen from 60 to six and all data is now centrally located. Ten subsidiaries now run on this infrastructure, with the remainder to be moved in phases.

BENEFITS

Get IT Faster

- Standardisation accelerates integration of new offices
- IT team rolls out virtual servers in just a few hours

Run IT Better

- Reliable storage supports compliance
- Server numbers fall from 60 to just six

Grow IT Smarter

- Virtualization improves scalability



Einhell Germany, based in Landau an der Isar, supplies solutions to tradesmen and DIY enthusiasts for home, garden and recreational uses. The company currently has 1,000 employees in 35 subsidiaries located in 27 countries worldwide. The lack of IT infrastructure standardisation across the organisation presented problems, particularly when the company wanted to integrate new offices into the existing IT landscape – a huge investment, which took up a lot of time and money. Each office followed different policies and used different solution providers, which made maintenance complicated and time-consuming.

The IT team decided to introduce a new strategy to simplify the management and expansion of its IT infrastructure. Dr Christoph Urban, director of the IT and Business Services division, Einhell Germany, says: "Within the context of our standardisation initiative, we're equipping all of our offices with identical IT infrastructures."

With Dell's support, Hans Einhell has standardised the IT infrastructure at its headquarters in Landau, Germany. The new Dell-based architecture serves as the model for all of the company's offices and has considerably simplified the integration of the IT systems used by its foreign subsidiaries.

However, before the initiative could be rolled out at all of the company's offices, the company needed to upgrade the IT infrastructure at its head office. Hans Einhell

pursued a three-stage plan: "First, with the acquisition of a Dell/EMC storage area network (SAN), we laid the foundation for the virtualization of our server structure", says Dr. Urban. "In the end, we managed to reduce the server load by implementing a new archiving solution."

The introduction of a new SAN was necessary because the company's data was decentralised and distributed, and held locally at all locations. "We were reliant on Direct Attached Storage," explains Dr. Urban. That is all data was held on local hard disk drives so information was not available centrally. "We wanted to change this by strengthening the position of both of our datacentres in Landau and consolidating all data into one SAN."



“THE STANDARDISED INFRASTRUCTURE OF OUR HEAD OFFICE SERVES AS THE MODEL FOR EXISTING AND NEW FOREIGN SUBSIDIARIES. ON THIS BASIS, THEY CAN BE INTEGRATED INTO THE IT INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE PARENT COMPANY EASILY AND SMOOTHLY.”

Dr Christoph Urban, director of the IT and Business Services division, Hans Einhell Germany AG

HOW IT WORKS

HARDWARE

- Dell™ PowerEdge™ 2900 server
- Dell/EMC CX500 storage area network (SAN)
- EMC Centera content addressed storage (CAS) system

SOFTWARE

- VMware® ESX Server software
- EMC MirrorView

SERVICES

- Dell Global Infrastructure Consulting Services
- Dell ProSupport for IT

The company bought two Dell/EMC CX500 storage area networks (SANs), which now host all important data from its ERP systems, inventory management and file and exchange servers. This gives Hans Einhell a total storage capacity of 13 terabytes. Given that both CX500s are distributed between and mirrored at two datcentres using EMC MirrorView, data availability is extremely high: if one system fails, the other immediately takes over.

The centralisation of data laid the foundation for virtualization. "The servers were redundant," explains Dr. Urban. "On the one hand, it was too expensive and on the other hand, the systems were not being used to full

capacity." Consolidating the systems by using VMware® ESX Server software has remedied the situation. Einhell Germany also worked closely with Dell on this solution. Says Dr. Urban: "Together with VMware, Dell presented us with an intelligent concept and provided an all-in-one, homogenous solution."

Throughout the project, the company had a dedicated contact at Dell who organised everything from design and conception, through to installation, virtualization, and training. "Dell and VMware ensured truly outstanding support," says Dr. Urban. The complete solution was installed by a Dell partner.

VIRTUALIZATION CUTS SERVER NUMBERS BY 90 PER CENT

As a result of the virtualization, the company reduced its server numbers from 60 to six PowerEdge™ 2900 servers, divided between the two datacentres. These servers run 60 virtual machines that support Linux web servers, databases, management and monitoring servers, front-end servers for email, as well as various Citrix and Navision ERP servers for remote access.

VIRTUAL SERVERS BOOST FLEXIBILITY WHILE MINIMISING ADMINISTRATION

With its new virtualized infrastructure, Einhell Germany has not only reduced its server fleet, explains Dr. Urban: "We can adapt server performance flexibly to our requirements and we also save on administration and operating costs." For example, IT staff have more time to invest in strategic work because they spend less time on routine tasks. They can deploy a new virtual server in a few hours. In the past, this could take weeks, because they had to order physical servers, wait for delivery, and then configure the new machines when they arrived. This also allows them to respond much more quickly to the needs of the business as it grows.

In addition, system utilisation has improved considerably: "The CPU load is around 30 per cent and the RAM load is 50 per cent," Dr. Urban says.

SECURE STORAGE SUPPORTS COMPLIANCE

Reducing the load on the SAN by implementing a new archiving solution was the last item on the company's agenda. This involved replacing an optical jukebox whose capacity of 640 gigabytes was no longer sufficient for

archiving documents, emails and other data. The system was complemented by the addition of an EMC Centera content addressed storage (CAS) system, which offers a storage capacity of seven terabytes divided into three pools.

"For security reasons and to ensure high availability, a second Centera was installed in a separate fire compartment at the company's premises," explains Dr. Urban. "The storage system is synchronised via IP replication." With these two datacentres, Einhell Germany satisfies compliance requirements, such as archiving tax relevant emails and documents in accordance with regulations.

STANDARDISATION LAYS A FUTURE-PROOF FOUNDATION

By standardising its datacentres in Landau, the company is extremely well equipped for future growth. "The standardised infrastructure of our head office serves as the model for existing and new foreign subsidiaries," states Dr. Urban. "On this basis, they can be integrated into the IT infrastructure of the parent company easily and smoothly." Einhell Germany has a uniform, transparent communications infrastructure in which its strategically important office in Shanghai can also be seamlessly integrated. Dell also supports the company's expansion directly on-site.

For more information on this case study or to read additional case studies, go to www.dell.com/casestudies and www.dell.de

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