



Fjord Seafood Nets 66 Percent Server Reduction with VMware Virtual Infrastructure

Global Supplier Uses VMware ESX Server, VirtualCenter and VMotion to Simplify Application Deployment and Administration, Solidify Disaster Recovery and Reduce Server Numbers by Two-Thirds

Results

- 66 percent reduction in server numbers
- LISA ERP system now disaster proof in VMware ESX Server environment
- Improved service levels with maximum downtime of 15 minutes guaranteed
- Microsoft® Windows® and SuSe Linux applications running on same physical server
- Lower ongoing costs, with more skilled IT team, lower headcount

Growth Through Acquisition Drives Server and Application Consolidation Initiative

Fjord Seafood is a leading global supplier of fresh and processed seafood products to food retailers, the catering industry and the fish processing industry. The Fjord Seafood group includes salmon farms, fish processing factories and sales offices in continental Europe, Norway and America. In 2001 Fjord Seafood Group acquired Fjord Pieters, formerly known as Pieters Visbedrijf, one of the largest seafood suppliers in Belgium.

At the time of its acquisition, Fjord Seafood Pieters was in the middle of upgrading its IT systems to improve operational efficiency at its three locations. The company faced a number of challenges, the most daunting of which was ensuring the reliability of LISA, a new resource-intensive ERP system that controls the supply, production, logistics and administration of all of the company's products. This mission-critical application had to be as disaster-proof as possible.

Fjord Seafood also needed to retire its IBM AS400 systems, which were becoming increasingly costly to manage, and simplify the management of its Windows and Linux line-of-business applications. At the same time, the company also had to migrate its end-of-life Windows NT4 systems to the newer Windows 2000 and 2003 server platforms.

A Fresh Approach

Sylvain van Gutschoven, IT systems manager, Europe, for Fjord Seafood, and his team, initially evaluated a traditional application server approach, in which each application would run on a separate physical server. It soon became apparent that this approach would lead to a significant rise in both capital and ongoing administrative costs, with more servers, a greater administrative workload, and greater complexity in the company's disaster recovery strategy.

A change of direction was required and Van Gutschoven turned to VMware to see if a virtual infrastructure approach could help solve their problems.

"One look at the VMware Web site was enough to convince me that virtualization was not just a tool for migrating my Windows environments, but a robust, proven infrastructure solution that could potentially solve all our problems," says Van Gutschoven. "All of the issues we were facing were dealt with in detail on the site — in particular server sprawl and disaster recovery. We knew that to meet our deadlines, we needed to get started with VMware software as soon as possible."

"I can't tell you what a relief it is to be able to work in this way. Before we discovered VMware technology we were expecting to have to work on a 'one application, one server' basis. ESX Server allows us to run Windows 2000, Windows 2003 and SuSe Linux 9 on just two physical machines, whilst also squeezing enough performance out of our Backup ERP system. I did not think this was possible."

*Sylvain van Gutschoven
IT Systems Manager, Europe, Fjord Seafood*



VMWARE VIRTUAL INFRASTRUCTURE AT WORK

- VirtualCenter, VMotion and ESX Server on two 8-CPU IBM eServer xSeries 445s
- IBM TotalStorage DS 4300 SAN
- Guest operating systems: Microsoft Windows 2000, Windows 2003 and SuSe Linux 9
- Applications running in virtual machines: LISA ERP system, Microsoft Exchange, Citrix Presentation Server, file and print servers, DMZ interchange servers, Microsoft SQL database

Shrink-Wrapping IT with Virtual Infrastructure

As a first step, Fjord Seafood consolidated its six application servers down to two by implementing VMware ESX Server on two IBM 8-way x445 servers, connected to a fiber storage area network (SAN). Van Gutschoven and his team then installed the company's new ERP system, and ran a series of tests, monitored by VMware VirtualCenter, to see how much they could count on the performance of the system in this environment.

The results impressed the team. "In the physical environment, the ERP system was so CPU-intensive that it required its own server," explains Van Gutschoven. "Now that we have the production ERP system running on VMware ESX Server and have CPU usage under control, we have also been able to implement proper disaster recovery procedures using VMotion and our SAN. As a result, we can guarantee that the back-up data will never be more than 15 minutes old."

"Virtualizing the ERP system took a lot of pressure off the servers — so much so, in fact, that we were able to virtualize almost every other component of our IT environment on the same two machines!" says Van Gutschoven. Today, more than 10 diverse applications, running on a range of operating systems, are installed on just two physical servers.

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VMotion for Disaster Recovery

Virtual infrastructure has also enabled Van Gutschoven and his team to build a highly robust disaster recovery solution. Using VMware VirtualCenter and VMotion in combination with the SAN, Fjord Seafood can spread server load at peak times, plan downtime and move sessions instantly in the event of hardware failure. As a result, Van Gutschoven can now guarantee a maximum of 15 minutes downtime on the company's ERP system.

VirtualCenter and VMotion have also dramatically simplified maintenance and support of applications, whilst also enabling Van Gutschoven to save on costs. Today, three staff members maintain all Windows and Linux applications, where previously he needed to have separate specialists for each environment.

"The intuitiveness of the products and the comprehensive training programs provided by VMware have allowed my team to rapidly expand their skill base and manage a highly complex, very diverse environment, with a lower headcount and lower ongoing costs," explains Van Gutschoven.

Supporting Virtual Infrastructure Across the Company

Van Gutschoven is also very pleased with the support provided by VMware and its partners. "There is a huge wealth of technical resources available, both from VMware's partners and via the Web site, and now also via the VMware Technology Network (VMTN)," he says. "I knew from the moment I came across the company that it was an organization that we could trust and rely on — a factor that will be increasingly important to us as we roll out virtual infrastructure across the company."

Although based in Belgium, Van Gutschoven's team has responsibility for Fjord Seafood's IT strategy throughout Europe. Having implemented a robust, high-performance virtual infrastructure for the company's Belgian operations, Van Gutschoven is now overseeing the rollout of VMware solutions in Norway, France and the Netherlands, and anticipates that other countries will follow in the near future.

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VMware, Inc. 3145 Porter Drive, Palo Alto, CA 94304 USA
Tel 650-475-5000 Fax 650-475-5001