

TOP TO BOTTOM

we know

they know

END TO END

Katorg selects SAP Business All-in-One with IBM System x and VMware

Overview

■ The Challenge

Katorg's distribution business was growing at a rate of 20 percent per year – and its IT infrastructure was struggling to keep up. Legacy systems and out-of-date hardware could not handle increasing transaction volumes, reducing productivity and causing delays that affected customer service.

■ The Solution

Katorg worked with c.a.r.u.s. IT to implement a new IBM System x 3850 M2 server, running virtualized SUSE Linux Enterprise Server environments with VMware technology to support an SAP Business All-in-One solution from Info AG. The company also implemented a new SAN based on IBM System Storage technologies.

■ The Benefits

System x provides a highly scalable and reliable infrastructure that has resolved performance issues. VMware virtualization will enable production, development and test environments to be run on a single server – improving hardware utilization and reducing costs.

■ Key Solution Components

Industry: Retail

Applications: SAP® Business All-in-One, based on SAP ERP 6.0 Retail template from SAP Certified Business Partner Info AG

Hardware: IBM® System x® 3850 M2 server, IBM System Storage® DS3400 Express disk system, IBM System Storage TS3100 tape library with LTO 4 drives, IBM SAN switches

Software: IBM Tivoli® Storage Manager for Enterprise Resource Planning, SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server, VMware ESXi, Oracle Services: c.a.r.u.s. IT, an IBM Business Partner; Info AG, an SAP Certified Business Partner

Katorg GmbH is an international mail order retail company, based in Hannover, Germany. The company works with numerous German manufacturers and distributors and delivers products to consumers across the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, as well as in the USA, Canada and Spain.

“We manage the entire process – from receiving the products from the manufacturers in Germany, through to delivering them to customers in other countries,” explains Maksim Kaplun, Project Manager at Katorg. “We work with a network of local mail order centers, and have a presence in almost every major city across the CIS. Moreover, our business is growing at a rate of 20 percent per year.”

This rapid growth was creating challenges for the company's IT department. The business depends on the ability of the local mail order centers to communicate with a central database in Germany, which enables the company to manage orders and logistics and ensures that the right products are sent to the right places at the right time.

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Maksim Kaplun, Project Manager,
Katorg GmbH

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As data volumes increased, Katorg’s legacy systems and outdated hardware were struggling to cope. Problems with IT performance and reliability led to reduced productivity, as workers in the company’s warehouses waited for new orders to be processed. This sometimes led to delays, which had an impact on customer service.

Choosing SAP

“We needed to update our IT infrastructure, and we decided to replace our various legacy systems with a modern ERP solution,” says Maksim Kaplun. “As the business grows we are trying out a lot of new developments, so versatility and scalability were the key features we were looking for.”

The company researched products from seven different suppliers, and discovered a retail-specific solution from SAP and Info AG.

“The retail-specific SAP Business All-in-One solution from Info AG, based on SAP ERP 6.0 and the SAP for Retail solution, seemed like a good fit for our business,” comments Maksim Kaplun. “It offered the flexibility to align with all of our core retail and logistics needs, and Info AG had included many pre-defined processes designed to help us implement the environment quickly.”

A virtualized infrastructure

Katorg needed a new hardware infrastructure to support the SAP Business All-in-One environment, and

approached c.a.r.u.s. IT, an IBM Business Partner and hardware specialist, to design a solution.

“We knew that the SAP solution would require separate production, development and test environments, but we did not want to buy and maintain three servers,” says Maksim Kaplun.

“The solution delivered by c.a.r.u.s. IT was excellent: by using VMware virtualization technology with SUSE Linux on the IBM System x platform, we would be able to run all our SAP applications and databases on a single server.”



VMware virtualization and IBM

VMware is a virtualization technology that has been fully certified by SAP, and enables numerous operating system environments to run simultaneously on a single server, with very little performance overhead.

Virtual machines can be provisioned very rapidly, helping Katorg set up new development and testing systems without any need to order and install new hardware.

The company currently runs all its development environments for SAP Business All-in-One and its Oracle database on four VMware virtual

machines, and is preparing to move its production systems into the virtualized environment in the near future.

“We originally tried using Xen virtualization, but we realized that running SAP and Oracle on VMware was much better supported,” says Maksim Kaplun. “We were prepared for a slight decrease in performance when we migrated to VMware – but in fact it’s just as fast. Everything is working perfectly and we are 100 percent satisfied, so we’re getting ready to switch our production systems over to VMware too.”

Benefits of IBM System x

The IBM System x3850 M2 server leverages fourth-generation IBM X-Architecture technology, which brings mainframe-inspired resilience and availability to the x86 platform. The server architecture is also highly scalable, capable of utilizing up to 16 quad-core Intel® Xeon® processors to provide excellent performance even as Katorg’s business grows.

“The System x server meets all our needs in terms of performance and stability,” comments Maksim Kaplun. “For high-performance SAP environments, there is no alternative to IBM in terms of value for money.”

Highly scalable storage

To complement the new infrastructure, c.a.r.u.s. IT also helped Katorg implement a storage area network (SAN) based on an IBM System Storage DS3400 Express disk system and a TS3100 tape library. The

DS3400 currently holds 9TB of business data, and is capable of scaling to 48TB – so it is an ideal platform to support Katorg’s expansion. The TS3100 uses high-performance LTO 4 tape drives to accelerate backups, which are managed using IBM Tivoli Storage Manager for Enterprise Resource Planning software.

“The IBM server and storage hardware form a compact infrastructure that is both stable and easy to manage,” comments Maksim Kaplun.

“We have tested all the hardware fully and are completely satisfied with its reliability. Tivoli Storage Manager for ERP is designed to make it easy to perform smooth, secure backups of our SAP application environment, so day-to-day administration is no problem.”

Making the most of SAP

With the hardware infrastructure in place, Katorg is in an excellent position to make the most of its new SAP Business All-in-One environment.

“As our in-house IT team gains experience with the SAP applications, we expect to be able to develop new processes and increase automation – improving productivity and reducing operational expenditure,” concludes Maksim Kaplun.

“The IBM, SAP and VMware solution will help us work more effectively with our partners and ultimately deliver a faster, better service to customers.”

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