

Case study

Geberit accelerates data analysis with SAP HANA



The company chose a TDI storage solution based on HP 3PAR StoreServ

Industry

Sanitary products

Objective

A highly available, flexible and easy to administer storage solution for SAP HANA and VMware

Approach

Comparison of various tailored data centre integration solutions on the market

IT matters

- Simple solution management
- Simple and flexible expandability under high performance requirements
- No training necessary for Geberit's IT personnel due to the knowledge transfer by HP and MCL during the implementation
- Option to carry out backups and restores that run in the background at any time without causing a drop in performance
- A highly flexible environment due to HP 3PAR StoreServ systems providing both the SAP HANA, VMware and fileservers data

Business matters

- Investment protection as the HP 3PAR StoreServ systems integrate seamlessly into the existing IT infrastructure
- Substantially lower life cycle costs in comparison to an appliance solution
- Fast availability of SAP HANA for the business as HP and MCL were able to carry out a quick and stringent implementation of the storage solution in a very short period of time
- High and very stable availability of all SAP applications by mirroring the storage solution



“Our decision to go with the HP 3PAR StoreServ 7400 Storage solution was mainly based on its simple management processes and technical functions, such as controller backup and automatic, transparent failover. All of the comparable solutions on the market were much more complex and would therefore require greater expenditure. Having a buffer for future performance requirements was also very important.”

– Thomas Vetter, head of IT infrastructure/CTO, Geberit Verwaltungs GmbH

Focussing on flexibility and cost savings

When converting its Oracle databases to SAP HANA, the Swiss manufacturer of sanitary products, Geberit, decided against an appliance storage solution. To increase flexibility for SAP and VMware and to decrease costs in the long term, the company chose a tailored data integration (TDI) solution, using two HP 3PAR StoreServ Storage systems.

■ GEBERIT



Challenge

A highly available storage infrastructure for SAP HANA

Geberit is an expert in both new builds and building renovations and modernisations. The company is Europe's market leader in sanitary technology and provides comprehensive systems for commercial and trade customers as well as end-users. Having highly flexible, sustainable products is very important to the company and its IT infrastructure has to meet these requirements too.

The company is growing and its data volumes increase by an average of 20 per cent each year. "We need a highly available IT infrastructure that the business can use to help it react quickly and flexibly," says Thomas Vetter, head of IT infrastructure/CTO at Geberit. So it's no wonder that the Swiss manufacturer of sanitary products wanted to migrate its SAP environment and the Oracle database at its heart, to SAP HANA as quickly as possible.

"With SAP HANA, calculations are carried out directly in the storage system. This gives us an amazing potential to increase the speed of analyses for sales and distribution," explains Vetter. In the past, large analyses had to run overnight due to their sheer volume. The results of the data analyses were therefore always based on the previous day's values. This was simply not sufficient for some parts of the company. "With SAP HANA, sales and distribution can now access real-time data, which means they can act much more quickly," says Vetter.

As well as the modernisation of the database platform, the company also chose to renew its existing storage infrastructure, which consisted of two HP Enterprise Virtual Arrays (EVA) 8400 systems, an HP EVA 8100 system and an HP EVA 8000 system in Pfullendorf, Germany. This is where Geberit's largest production site is located. The existing storage systems were aging and the company urgently needed to expand its capacities and performance.

The SAP HANA project was the final, decisive push for Geberit to completely renovate its storage infrastructure. The company quickly acknowledged that an appliance solution would not be suitable for SAP HANA due to the high administration expenditure. The database solution would – as it had in the past – instead need to run on the same storage platform as the other systems in the company. A tailored data centre integration (TDI) approach was needed. "The interchangeability and reutilisation of the hardware components is very important to us," says Vetter. "We simply have to use standard components to make our operations cost-effective, as only these guarantee us enough flexibility."



About Geberit

The Geberit Group is the European market leader in the field of sanitary technology and operates globally. Since it was founded in 1874, the company has been considered one of the pioneers of the sector and is constantly developing new trends with its comprehensive system solutions. The company is currently represented in 41 countries worldwide, and has 17 production sites in eight different countries. Its main production sites are in Switzerland, Germany and Austria. In 2013, the Geberit Group generated revenues of 2.3 billion Swiss Francs. It employs around 6,200 people worldwide. The Rapperswil-Jona-based company has been listed on the Swiss stock exchange since 1999 and in 2012, Geberit shares were added to the SMI (Swiss Market Index).

Solution

A TDI solution with HP 3PAR StoreServ 7400 Storage system

Geberit compared TDI solutions from a number of providers and also consulted its long-term infrastructure partners MCL and HP. “We had always been very satisfied with the HP EVA systems in the past because they are very easy to configure. So the bar for the new system was set very high,” remembers Vetter.

Based on this, MCL and HP recommended consolidating the existing HP EVA systems into a central HP 3PAR StoreServ 7400 system that could then synchronise and replicate its data onto a second system at the same site.

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Before the project could begin, there was one more challenge to overcome: At the time, the HP 3PAR StoreServ system was not certified for SAP HANA TDI. But both SAP and HP agreed and an exception was made, so there was nothing left blocking the implementation.

First, MCL and HP worked closely with Geberit to define the requirements and design of the solution: There would be two mirrored HP 3PAR StoreServ 7400 systems, each with four nodes per system and a total of 320 hard drives. The size of the solution was calculated using the current data volumes with an upwards buffer. “It was important to us that the solution could handle storage and performance growth of 20 per cent per year. With the HP 3PAR StoreServ system, this is not a problem at all as we can expand it at any time by adding more hard drives,” says Vetter, happily.

MCL and HP then worked together to tackle the installation and configuration of the storage system. HP was responsible for managing the project. At this stage, another challenge arose: As other IT projects were being carried out at Geberit, there was a window of just a few short weeks during which the migration had to take place. “The teamwork on this project was excellent. The project coordination was fantastic and the implementation went faster than expected, even though we had already had a loose schedule at the planning stage. This was only possible due to good coordination and professional collaboration between all of the parties involved,” says Vetter. “MCL’s consulting services were also excellent. This is absolutely critical to help build the trusting relationship you need when working on a project like this. Our IT specialists were also able to benefit from MCL and HP’s expertise during the implementation, and so were able to manage the systems straight away without any additional training.”

Customer solution at a glance

Application

SAP ERP 6.0
Lotus Notes

Hardware

- HP 3PAR StoreServ 7400 Storage system

Software

- SAP HANA
- VMware vSphere
- HP 3PAR Reporting Software Suite
- HP 3PAR Application Software Suite for VMware
- HP 3PAR Replication Suite
- HP 3PAR Data Optimization Suite
- HP 3PAR Service Processor Software
- HP 3PAR Thin Provisioning Software

HP services

- Installation
- Consulting
- HP Support Plus 24

Our solution partners



About MCL

MCL Computer & Zubehör GmbH is based in Böblingen and has seven sites and over 100 employees across Germany. As an HP Platinum Partner, MCL provides system solutions based on HP server, storage and network products, as well as services in the fields of virtualisation, consolidation, storage management and system monitoring. As well as its solutions business, MCL is the largest HP Renew partner in the EMEA, which means it can provide optimum purchasing conditions and excellent product availability with its own storage site.

Advantages

Greater flexibility, lower costs

The first step was to install two HP 3PAR StoreServ 7400 systems in Pfullendorf. In the coming year, the data centre in Rapperswil-Jona will also be fitted with two HP 3PAR StoreServ systems so that the company can benefit from asynchronous mirroring between the two sites.

Replication and transparent failover are two of the basic software functionalities at the heart of Geberit's HP 3PAR StoreServ 7400 systems: "If one data centre goes down, the second data centre at the site can completely assume all of its functions in a very short amount of time," says Vetter. "With our VMware environment, this was absolutely essential."

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The manufacturer also uses other software functions: The reporting function, for example, which provides transparency in case of an emergency and for performance planning. The thin technologies improve the cost-effectiveness of the storage system. This functionality provides opportunities for cost savings when expanding the storage capacities: When a new volume is added, storage resources are assigned, but only used by the storage system when it is actually requested by the host. With the tiering function, Geberit has the option to meet performance requirements with efficient storage types of different speeds in the future: The HP 3PAR StoreServ 7400 decides automatically to which storage type the data should be written.

"With the HP 3PAR StoreServ system, we have much greater flexibility as compared to an appliance solution. And the costs are also much lower," states Vetter. "The migration was easy and ran smoothly. The solution is also very performant and stable. Before going live, all of the functions were tested intensively and approved during the project phase. And we could see the benefits even then - we could hardly believe it. The management of the HP 3PAR StoreServ system is also incredibly simple. We can now carry out backups and restores that run in the background at any time, without seeing any drops in performance. The multi-controller architecture gives us high availability and optimum performance for our business-critical SAP HANA environment."

As a result, the success of this project has paved the way for Geberit to migrate all of its SAP instances – over 20 – to SAP HANA within the next three years.

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