

Costs reduced and flexibility maintained – SAP migration to HP Integrity servers and SUSE Linux



“It was a strategic decision to switch to Itanium and SUSE Linux, because what matters in the end to an entrepreneur are costs and reliability.”
Daniel Nydegger, IT head of group, Müller Martini

MULLER MARTINI

Objective:

Müller Martini, an international leader in the field of print finishing equipment, needed to renew its business-critical SAP platform to achieve reduction in system complexity; adaptation of security and availability to meet the growing requirements of the company; scalability; and optimise costs.

Approach:

- Combined performance and cost optimisation in the server environment.
- HP Integrity rx4640-8 and rx2620 servers, and HP ProLiant DL380 G4 servers.
- SUSE Linux from Novell as the operating system.
- Critical resources are distributed between two data centres; in the case of disaster, the production systems will be restarted via SAN boot.
- HP Systems Insight Manager for hardware management and release control of the entire platform.
- A single point of contact for all service needs.
- GIA as the operator and HP with 24/7 support for hardware and operating software including SUSE Linux.

IT improvements:

- Standardised, flexible and expandable hardware platform.
- Open source operating system.
- High availability and stability.
- Integration of current infrastructure as well as the skills, tools and processes in the operation.

Business benefits:

- 30 per cent reduction of operating costs.



Müller Martini is an international leader in the field of print finishing equipment. Nine production plants in Switzerland, Germany, the USA and China, as well as 30 dedicated sales and service companies on five continents, are evidence of the success of the Swiss family enterprise. Müller Martini develops, builds and sells systems for print finishing in the graphics industry. The equipment offers ranges from simple wire stitchers to fully-automated book binding production lines for brochures and high-quality hardcover books. Furthermore, Müller Martini produces roll offset printing presses that can handle variable sizes. The company consciously maintains a reserved public presence and concentrates on its entrepreneurial core competencies.

“We are a healthy company in a highly competitive market. This is attributed to the fact that we formulate

strategic decisions as goal-oriented projects subject to tight project controlling,” explains Daniel Nydegger, IT head of group at Müller Martini, with regard to the initial situation. Accordingly, there is a clearly defined project for the long-term development of the IT infrastructure which, from a business perspective, is a crucial component for maintaining competitiveness. In just three months the contracted parties have created an IT environment that provides security and flexibility at low cost.

Cost-intensive, organically grown system environment

All fields of business at Müller Martini are managed with enterprise resource planning (ERP) software. The company works with an SAP R/3 system environment for controlling business processes ranging from material logistics to quality management, marketing and finances.

Previously, the SAP environment operated with HP AlphaServer systems with the Tru64 UNIX operating system. The infrastructure, which had developed organically over time, no longer met the current requirements for operation and was in need of consolidation. Moreover, the prerequisites for a possible SAP release change in 2007 were not given by that platform. Thus, it was necessary to migrate about 1,000 active users to a new, adaptable IT environment.

Cost reduction, flexibility and expandability

“We sent a list of strict requirements to all IT companies submitting a proposal. There were various strategic aspects: in addition to a flexible,

expandable solution for the coming years, the reduction of ongoing costs was of primary importance,” says Nydegger. A seamless transition from the old to the new platform was another important criterion.

The requirements for availability and stability were defined in service level agreements. For the print finishing specialists, it was critical to ensure IT operation 24 hours a day, seven days a week without longer interruptions. Availability exceeding 99 per cent, in conjunction with a secure storage and backup system, was a critical operating requirement. The system must also be able to endure disasters.

The evaluation was performed by Müller Martini, in close collaboration with the company’s IT subsidiary GIA GRAPHIA-Informatik AG. The many years of experience of GIA in the operating environment of SAP systems, as well its technological competence provided a good basis for careful evaluation of all suppliers in this area.

After the first round of evaluation, only two IT suppliers remained, one of which was HP. “In the end, we were convinced by the professional

preparation work by HP. The broad portfolio of standardised products ensures a homogeneous, easily managed infrastructure. Furthermore, we are looking back at a trustful relationship lasting many years," says Nydegger, explaining the basis of his decision. As a platform supplier, HP has a dedicated SAP group and can therefore draw on considerable competence to address the needs of Müller Martini.

Itanium/Linux/SAP

The clear, entrepreneurial decision of Müller Martini for its future SAP platform was made in favour of a combination of Itanium-based 64-bit HP Integrity servers and 32-bit HP ProLiant industry-standard systems. Novell's SUSE Linux was chosen as the operating system. The database on the Integrity systems is Oracle, and maxDB is used on the HP ProLiant systems. This combination provides the company with a powerful, flexible and expandable solution at an optimised cost. Itanium systems, with their true 64-bit architecture, not only provide high performance, but also support four leading industrial operating systems – HP-UX 11i, Linux, OpenVMS and Microsoft Windows Server 2003 – running independently of one another on isolated partitions. This flexibility ensures excellent protection of Müller

Martini's capital investment, while at the same time keeping operating costs low.

SUSE Linux was chosen as the operating system because of its technical quality and compliance with open standards. SAP, the most important element in the solution, is comprehensively supported, as are both the Oracle and maxDB databases. A decisive factor in choosing a UNIX-based operating system was the value to the company of using the existing employee expertise in UNIX syntax from Tru64. The use of SUSE Linux also contributed significantly to the optimised cost of the system.

To achieve the required security against failure of the infrastructure, the systems and storage components were installed in two separate data centres. They are linked to one another with fibre optic lines and equipped with SAN boot. Data integrity is ensured by the mirrored data and backup storage system.

All SAP systems are redundantly connected to the storage area network (SAN). If one of the data centres suffers a failure, the application is available to the users again within the shortest period of time.

The overall hardware management, release control and error management for the entire platform is handled by a single software application, HP Systems Insight Manager.

Like the systems it is replacing, this new IT environment will be managed by GIA. In the area of manufacturer support, HP is assuming responsibility for the entire platform. HP is the central support contact for hardware, operating software and also

Customer solution at a glance

Primary applications

- SAP R/3

Primary hardware

- HP Integrity rx4640-8
- HP Integrity rx2620
- HP ProLiant G4

Primary software

- SUSE Linux
- Tru64 UNIX
- Oracle database
- maxDB database
- HP Systems Insight Manager

HP Services

- 24/7 support for hardware and operating software

the SUSE Linux operating system, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Success achieved

"We wanted to keep our options as open as possible," emphasises Nydegger, "and that is what we have achieved with this decision." The IT infrastructure chosen supports all the original corporate objectives formulated by Müller Martini: a flexible architecture based on open standards which keeps all options for expansion open to this international operation; proven industry standards that meet the primary objective of cost reduction for maintenance and operation; and high availability to minimise business downtimes.

The migration project managed by GIA was completed on schedule thanks to the commitment of all those involved. The new platform was put into operation just three months after the active start of the project. Employees remarked that they were only aware of a change to the SAP system over the weekend because of the noticeably enhanced performance.

Müller Martini has decreased the company's IT maintenance and operating costs by about 30 per cent as a result of the migration. The return on investment is high enough to cover the cost of the system in just a year. "We have reached our objective, even exceeded it somewhat," says Nydegger with great satisfaction. "We would make the same decision again any time." Müller Martini now enjoys an annual saving of 1,000 Swiss francs per workstation.

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