VBK Groep triples ICT efficiency with move to virtualisation

HP virtualisation delivers operational cost savings and secures business continuity

Industry
Building and Construction

Objective
Replace an ageing server environment to improve efficiency, safeguard business continuity and lower operating costs

Approach
Assess market options, with emphasis on finding a partner capable of supplying servers and storage with a long-term virtualisation strategy

IT matters
- Improves ICT efficiency rates from 20 per cent to 65 per cent
- Creates a standardised IT environment, lowering management and maintenance costs

Business matters
- Delivers greater resilience to ensure higher level of business continuity
- Secures a long-term partner on a journey towards greater virtualisation

“We chose HP in the end because they offered servers and storage in a single package.”

– Ton Hoogland, head of ICT, VBK Groep

Transition from the old environment to the new one was problem-free

VBK Groep is a Dutch construction business based in Hoorn, the Netherlands. Just two people run its IT department, serving five offices and 150 construction sites, employing approximately 250 people. For its project management, the local partner MostWare advised Hyper-V virtualisation – a move that delivered greater efficiency, lower operating costs and increased data availability.

Customer solution at a glance

Hardware
- HP StoreVirtual storage
- HP ProLiant servers
- HP ProCurve networking

HP services
- HP Foundation Care Services

Challenge

Enhanced manageability

The VBK Groep has been involved in construction and infrastructural projects for over 50 years, from residential and utilities construction, concrete construction and civil engineering, groundwork and road construction, to pipe construction and concrete repair work. The family business employs approximately 250 staff in five offices throughout the Netherlands, with its ICT department in Hoorn supporting 150 operational sites.

The ICT team consists of just two people. Together with partner MostWare, a relationship that goes back more than ten years, they support the VBK Groep staff and look for more efficient ways of working.

The ICT department was battling with an ageing server environment and the individual servers were becoming tricky to manage. To add to that, work processes were not running smoothly. Under the leadership of Ton Hoogland, the team drafted a plan to move from small, project-oriented jobs to, effectively, an entire management system for major projects.

Hoogland wanted to ensure that there were better safeguards for business continuity. There were enough reasons to look for a comprehensive solution that would do justice to what the business needed in terms of standardisation and virtualisation.

Solution

The path to virtualisation

Of all the candidates, HP and MostWare offered the best and most complete solution: a full Hyper-V virtualisation cluster based on HP StoreVirtual nodes, HP ProLiant servers and HP ProCurve networking.

"MostWare keeps a finger on the pulse, so they know how things are going with us. That's really valuable."

– Ton Hoogland, head of ICT, VBK Groep

"The use of a HP StoreVirtual product line and the HP competitive tender meant the investment was relatively low. HP was able to offer both the servers and the storage in a single package; yet another reason to choose HP. The ICT department was already familiar with the HP servers, which made for a short learning curve."

As well as providing advice during the selection process, MostWare took care of the initial and ongoing implementation.

Benefits

Cost efficiencies, continuity and efficiency

Optimal use of the hardware involved in the virtualisation platform provides 65 per cent efficiency, as opposed to 20 per cent previously.

It also means that the VBK Groep can respond more quickly to anything that the business might want, for instance, if there's a temporary need for extra capacity, extra space or different configurations for a test environment.

Moving to a single storage environment has delivered the desired standardisation. Instead of single server virtualisation, the current virtualisation cluster provides an element of redundancy.

The central configuration provides a single source of storage space where all the capacity is available on all the servers, improving the efficiency of access. The virtual nodes are also copies of each other, so that if a server fails, this has no impact on continuity.

The transition from the old environment to the new one was problem-free, meaning that the users suffered little inconvenience.

The cost price remains a decisive factor for future projects when selecting suppliers. That said, a good collaborative relationship, with a single point of contact, is also a decisive factor; close collaboration is the key to success. Suppliers of other products and services sometimes only feel like showing their face or getting in touch when their contract is about to run out. Not so with MostWare, who keep a finger on the pulse, so they know how things are going with us. And that's really valuable.

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