FUJITSU

Case Study
ARA Assistance

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"**Automatic failover has enabled us to fulfill one of our board's central business continuity management requirements.**"

Christian Jäger, IT Manager, ARA Assistance

The customer

ARA Assistance offers a wide range of customer management services for the insurance, travel and motoring sectors. These include telephone based claims management for insurers, organizing accident and breakdown assistance for customers and providing travel health insurance related services around the world. The company's competence center is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Ensuring that the system environment is as reliable as possible is therefore one of the board's key requirements. The association shares its data center with the Auto und Reiseclub Deutschland (ARCD, German Automobile and Travel Club), one of the other companies within ARA GmbH. Founded in 1928, the ARCD was Germany's first automotive and travel club and now has 125,000 members across the country. The publishing house and market researcher Auto&Reise GmbH – Verlag und irtschaftsdienst, which publishes the ARCD club magazine "Auto&Reise", also uses the data center.

The challenge

At four years old, the IT infrastructure at ARA Assistance was beginning to show its age, and the company had decided it was time to replace the entire server and storage landscape. "In my opinion, the most important benefit is that we now have automatic failover between the two SAN storage devices," says IT Manager, Christian Jäger. "This has enabled us to fulfill one of our board's central business continuity management requirements," he continues. If the systems fail, the emergency backup system is activated without the users noticing. So there is no longer any need to reboot individual applications manually.

The solution

The company installed two FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY RX2540 as productive systems, a FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY RX2540 as a backup server, two FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS DX200 S3 and four Fibre Channel switches, which made direct cabling unnecessary. All of the systems are fitted with Intel® Xeon® processors.

The customer

Country: Germany
Industry: Insurance
Founded: 1997
Employees: over 60
Website: www.ara-assistance.com

ARA ASSISTANCE

The challenge

Replace the server and storage infrastructure to fulfill the board's requirement for improved business continuity management.

The solution

Implement automatic failover so that systems and applications no longer have to be switched over manually in the event of a failure; reducing the number of servers.

The benefit

- Fujitsu solution makes using automatic failover possible and affordable
- Storage limits have been lifted
- Integrating SSD drives into the storage system has significantly improved significantly

One of the many benefits is that the new FUJITSU PRIMERGY RX2540 server are much more powerful than their predecessors. IT Manager Christian Jäger now gets more performance from two servers than he previously did with three. "This means that our team has one less machine to support," he says. The migration also negated the need for special backup software for data tapes. Veeam is now used instead. "This not only saves on licensing and support costs, but also reduces the time we spend on this area as we only have one piece of backup software to manage," says Jäger.

The IT Manager had long had an automatic failover solution on his wish list, but it had always been too expensive. "With the new offer from FUJITSU, automatic failover has now become affordable," he says, happily. He tested a variety of alternatives during the process of tendering out the new IT infrastructure. But although these were the same price, they were lacking when it came to performance, providing only a third of the power.

Fujitsu systems partner, Bechtle, configured the new systems according to ARA Assistance's specifications. The data was then migrated while the systems operated in parallel. "The downtime was just a few hours," says Jäger. The team did not experience any problems at all. Once all of the data had been moved over, the IT team tested the new failover feature. "We tested an emergency situation after the installation and it all went exactly according to plan," says Marcel Vogler, who managed the project in his role as Team Coordinator for Bechtle. "The next failover test is due to be carried out in early 2016," adds Jäger.

The benefit

The most important benefit for the IT team at ARA Assistance is that the failover feature enables them to fulfill the board's requirement for the call center to be fully operational 24 hours a day.

Made in Germany

Products and services

- 2 x FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY RX2540 8 x 2.5"
- 1 x FUJITSU Server PRIMERGY RX2540 8 x 2.5" backup server
- 2 x FUJITSU Storage ETERNUS DX200 S3 with automatic failover
- 4 x BROCADE 6505 Fibre Channel switches
- Installation of Veeam to backup the virtual servers to FUJITSU ETERNUS LT tape libraries
- Concept and implementation workshop
- Pre-configuration of the systems and support in dividing the virtual server systems across the two storage systems

It also reduces the strain on the IT department as the previous failover solution was very complicated and required a lot of manual work such as disconnecting and reconnecting cables. The current system is designed for long term use and is set to last for five years as opposed to the previous system's three. The costs of the investment will be depreciated over the same period. The RAM in the previous system was reaching its limits at around 90 percent capacity, but with 256 GB in the new system there are now sufficient reserves. The system is capable of up to 26,000 IOPS and there is now sufficient storage space for the Exchange database, too. "Another advantage of having the SSD drives in the storage system is that it has made it performant enough for us to start to virtualize our database server," says Jäger.

Storage space limits are another thing of the past. This is particularly important as further changes – such as a new member support system – are on their way. There will be more than enough space for them on the new systems.

Conclusion

The new IT infrastructure has enabled the company to implement automatic failover for the very first time. This ensures business continuity, keeping the call center running around the clock. Performance bottlenecks have also been resolved by adding more RAM.

"With the new offer from Fujitsu, automatic failover has become affordable."
Christian Jäger, IT Manager, ARA Assistance

More information: www.fujitsu.com/de/ETERNUS