FUJITSU

Case Study
VBH Holding AG

"Fujitsu provided us with highly professional support and consulting services when migrating our Business Warehouse system to SAP HANA."

Oliver Maisch, CIO, VBH Holding AG

The customer

Country: Germany, sales worldwide
Industry: Wholesaler/building hardware
Founded: 1975
Employees: 2,500
Website: www.vbh.de

VBH

The challenge

VBH found that its Business Warehouse system was no longer performing satisfactorily. Data queries often took several minutes, testing employees' patience and slowing down service and sales processes. To resolve the situation, it decided to implement SAP HANA® in-memory database technology.

The solution

As part of a PoC, Fujitsu set up a production environment based on a virtualized HANA system. Following extensive tests, PRD and DEV were set up in parallel. Fujitsu provides the technical infrastructure in its high-security, certified data centers in Germany and handles the operation of the entire SAP HANA architecture.

The customer

The VBH Group deals in all forms of building hardware. For 40 years, the market's leading building hardware trader has been providing industrial companies and tradespeople with everything they need to manufacture and install windows and doors. In addition to an extensive and demand-oriented product range and a wide variety of brands, the company also offers a comprehensive service portfolio – from an online customer portal to a web platform for the CE marking of windows and doors and a customer-specific product catalog at the touch of a button.

The challenge

The VBH Group's international focus means that IT with a strong global position is key to its success. This requires a high-performance database architecture that the existing Business Warehouse system could not provide, prompting the IT managers to invest in more efficient database technology and opting for SAP HANA. Fujitsu had already been reliably operating and hosting the complex SAP landscape for three years. VBH's positive experiences and high satisfaction with the service provider led them to commission Fujitsu to migrate the existing SAP BW system to SAP HANA® as well.

The solution

As part of a proof of concept (PoC), a production environment (PRD) was to be set up based on a virtualized HANA system (vHANA) and comprehensively tested without impairing day-to-day business. Fujitsu began installing and configuring the systems in February 2015. The PoC environment was set up in the same way as the production system, via a system copy with the aid of SAP Post-Copy Automation (PCA). At the same time, Fujitsu upgraded the PoC environment to SAP NetWeaver (NW) 7.4 and migrated the database platform to HANA. The experts also set up the required interfaces and dealt with network connections and activations. The original BW PRD system based on the DB2 database and the PoC on vHANA were run and tested in parallel for around two months. Once the tests were completed successfully, the PRD and DEV systems were set up in parallel. From the outset, Fujitsu had a tight implementation schedule, which it met, with predefined deadlines.

The benefit

- PoC enables extensive tests without impairing ongoing operations
- SAP HANA significantly increases performance of Business Warehouse system
- Customer data called up in seconds thanks to in-memory technology
- Analysis and evaluation of large quantities of data during complex reports improve management of customer relationships
- Professional and reliable operation of the SAP HANA infrastructure in high-security, certified data centers in Germany

Products and services

- Comprehensive project management
- Close collaboration with customer to adhere to the very challenging schedule
- Set-up of a PoC environment for the PRD system on SAP HANA
- Backup configuration and system management
- SAP release upgrade for the PoC environment and migration of the database platform to SAP HANA using SAP DMO
- Set-up of the required interfaces
- Network connections and activations
- Parallel set-up of PRD and DEV systems
- Provision of the technical infrastructure in Fujitsu's data centers

The benefit

The in-memory database went live in mid-April 2015, and the benefits of the SAP HANA architecture quickly became apparent. The rapid in-memory technology allowed 150 users at VBH to benefit from a significant increase in performance. The time required for complex customer data queries dropped from several minutes to just a few seconds. Customer advisers can access all relevant information in real-time at the click of a mouse. When on the phone, they can provide their clients with prompt information, boosting the quality of service and sales consulting. This fits in perfectly with the company's guidelines: VBH is committed to offering its customers a particular level of service with quick response times and short delivery periods.

The plan is for the in-memory database to support all e-business processes in the future, something of great importance to VBH as an international specialist trader. SAP HANA is to serve as a stable, high-performance platform. Information about how buyers and visitors use the online shop will be used to shed light on customers' wishes and product preferences.

The huge quantities of data this produces (big data) will then be evaluated and analyzed almost in real-time with the aid of the in-memory technology. This will allow VBH to better understand the needs of its customers and develop tailored services precisely and quickly. In the company's plans for the future, the new platform will also help it to efficiently reach customers and harness additional international sales potential.

Conclusion

VBH benefits from the service provider's outstanding expertise in SAP HANA and its many years of experience from numerous successful projects. In addition, Fujitsu operates the international ERP system as part of cloud-based services on an Infrastructure-as-a-Service platform. State-of-the-art Fujitsu hardware is also used. Migrating its Business Warehouse system to SAP HANA allowed the VBH Group to significantly increase database performance. In the future, it will be able to use SAP HANA in further areas with plenty of benefits for its core business, particularly e-business.

"Fujitsu's experts have done a fantastic job of migrating our Business Warehouse landscape to SAP HANA on a very tight schedule. The preliminary proof of concept allowed us to test the production system comprehensively, ensuring we made the right decision by investing in the database technology."
Oliver Maisch, CIO, VBH Holding AG