GKN Walterscheid GmbH migrates mission critical ERP application from HP e3000 to HP 9000

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Following the migration, the stability and performance of our ERP application have grown immensely. We also appreciate additional capabilities such as in-depth queries and fast and easy ad-hoc reporting.

– Helmut Bardeli, CIO,
  GKN Walterscheid GmbH, Lohmar, Germany

Global player in agricultural drive line systems

As the world market leader in drive line and attachment systems for tractors, self-propelled vehicles and agricultural machinery, GKN Walterscheid GmbH stands for uncompromising quality and innovation. The company's automated high-bay warehouse operations rely on a proven ERP application tailored to its specific requirements. This application and its database were successfully migrated from HP e3000 running MPE to HP 9000 running HP-UX.

Investment protection

In the automated warehousing facility operated by GKN Walterscheid GmbH, binning, picking and re-plenishment span three shifts. Controlling a total of 6,000 bin locations, the underlying ERP application is mission critical to the company's flow of materials.

"Our ERP application uses a number of control protocols and low-level calls that relate directly to the operating system. Therefore, it was clear to us that migrating from MPE on the HP e3000 to HP-UX on an HP 9000 would pose a number of challenges. However, we simply wanted a 'black box' – an overall solution providing the same functionality on a new platform," notes Helmut Bardeli, CIO, GKN Walterscheid GmbH, Lohmar, Germany.

Competent partners

Following an initial assessment, HP coordinated the selection of migration partners and products. The GKN Walterscheid migration project involved three parties: B&B Unternehmensberatung (Germany), Nexio (Canada), and GKN's internal IT team.

"B&B offered to take on overall project management at a very reasonable price. Nexio was commissioned with the hands-on part of the application migration, to be performed by developers in Canada. We were particularly impressed with the way Nexio managed to migrate the system-level routines from MPE to HP-UX. The eloquence database, supplied by Marxmeier Software AG, marks another highlight of this project. This first-class product is compatible with our legacy TurboImage database, and the support for eloquence is great," says Helmut Bardeli.

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Quality improvements

"The migration project has helped to significantly im-
prove the quality and stability of our ERP application.
For instance, our test procedures revealed a number
of legacy bugs that would have never come to light
without the migration. Reworking the ERP code was
definitely worth while," recalls Helmut Bardeli.

"The migration from HP e3000 to HP 9000 requires
a considerable amount of testing. Scheduling the 'go
live' testing of the migrated ERP application in a
mission critical production environment proved to
be quite challenging. Our warehouse is busy around
the clock. Any impact on production was out of the
question. Consequently, we only had the occasional
Saturday morning and late Sunday nights for testing in
our production environment," explains Helmut Bardeli.

Additional capabilities

"The most obvious improvement achieved through our
migration project is the amazing performance of our
ERP application on the HP 9000 server. For the GUI,
we chose NetExpress from Micro Focus. Also, unlike
MPE, our HP-UX environment allows us to connect
PCs as peripherals. QUERY3K, a recent addition to
the eloquence database environment, enables users
to define and execute in-depth queries with minimum
effort. Ad-hoc reporting is now much easier and more
user friendly. To sum things up: The migrated ERP
application provides exactly what we were looking
for – the same functionality with greater stability plus
a number of significant usability improvements."

Prior to migration	Following migration	Benefits achieved
One HP e3000/918LX, PA7100 processor, using MPE	One HP 9000 rp2470, PA8600, 550 MHz, using HP-UX	High-performance, scalable server platform
HP Cobol compiler	Micro Focus Cobol compiler	Consistent in-house solution
TurboImage database	eloquence database	Ease of data migration, similar handling, enhanced user productivity
VPLUS GUI	Micro Focus NetExpress	Versatility plus the ability to connect standard PCs as peripherals

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