Business Challenge

NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics aimed to fine-tune its SAP HANA® hosting services for clients and differentiate itself from peers by optimizing its hardware environment.

Transformation

The company deployed IBM® Power Systems™ servers and IBM FlashSystem® storage to enhance its offering to clients running SAP Business Warehouse and SAP Business Suite powered by SAP HANA.

Business benefits:

60%
faster provisioning of new virtual servers

30%
reduction in operating costs, enabling NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics to tempt clients with superb value for money

95%
time saving on reporting for one client

NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics

Reinforces its market-leading position in SAP hosting services with cutting-edge IBM infrastructure

NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics (external link), formerly itelligence, is a global SAP Platinum Partner with over 25 years' experience. The company offers everything from consulting to implementation and managed services to support clients throughout their digital transformation. As part of the NTT DATA Group, the company draws upon a global network of over 13,500 SAP professionals in 52 countries around the world. In the Nordic region, NTT DATA Business Solutions is located in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark.

"Deploying IBM Power Systems and IBM FlashSystem has been transformational for our business—our offering has grown to the extent that we are now able to expand into new markets and reach new customers."

Torben Prang,
Director of IT and Infrastructure,
NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics

Share this

Standing out from the crowd

In the bustling IT service provider sector, carving out a competitive niche is vital to commercial success. With so many players in the market, organizations must demonstrate an edge over rivals to gain new clients and stay ahead.

NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics, a leading IT service provider and long-established SAP partner, works with clients from all over the Nordic region to help manage and optimize their SAP applications, many of which run on the SAP HANA in-memory database. The company is constantly seeking to improve its service offering in order to differentiate itself from its peers.

Torben Prang, Director of IT and Infrastructure at NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics, comments, "We were looking for a hardware solution to support clients' SAP applications that would make us stand out from the competition and impress prospects. We wanted to improve the SLAs we could offer around performance and availability, while cutting our operating costs to lower fees and attracting new customers. We needed a vendor that really understood SAP applications and could deliver on our clients' high expectations."

30% reduction in operating costs

Improvements across the board

NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics decided to give clients the option of running their hosted SAP Business Warehouse powered by SAP HANA and SAP Business Suite powered by SAP HANA solutions on IBM Power Systems servers.

The company chose IBM POWER9™ servers, virtualized using IBM PowerVM®, and decided to run the SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications (external link) operating system on each device.

The leading-edge virtualization provided by IBM PowerVM enables NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics to run multiple client systems securely on each physical server. As a result, NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics can support its booming SAP hosting services business using a smaller physical footprint—boosting cost-efficiency and reducing management overhead.

Torben Prang remarks, "Many of our customers are producing enormous amounts of data in SAP HANA, which they analyze to gain insight and improve business performance. To accommodate growing data volumes while meeting our SLAs, we either had to scale up or scale out our capacity. To minimize our efforts and expenditure, we decided to scale up by investing in additional hardware to boost capacity, and IBM Power Systems was the obvious choice."

Torben Prang continues, "There are real technical benefits that we have found running SAP HANA on IBM Power Systems that we simply could not achieve with the servers offered by other vendors. We were attracted by the excellent uptime provided by IBM Power Systems and the ability to scale up capacity without having to acquire and set up a new physical server."

To complement the new IBM Power Systems servers, NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics deployed two IBM FlashSystem 5000 all-flash storage systems. The storage solutions enable the company to provide fast and easy maintenance services, freeing up technical teams to work more flexibly and spend more time on value-added tasks. IBM Systems Lab Services managed the implementation of the company's new storage solution and trained its technical team on the system.

Torben Prang remarks, "Once we had installed our IBM Power Systems servers, choosing IBM FlashSystem for our storage solution was an easy decision. IBM FlashSystem is a true market leader, and it makes sense to work with a single vendor across the whole stack."

Torben Prang says, "We had a really good experience with the IBM team. We have known IBM for many years, and we are familiar with their reputation for diligence and technical expertise. Our interaction with them was no different—our account manager was excellent, and helped make the entire installation process as smooth as possible. We felt that the IBM team were truly invested in the success of the project, and it was much easier to implement IBM Power Systems than most other server platforms that we've worked with."

> "We felt that IBM was truly invested in the success of the project, and it was much easier to implement IBM Power Systems than most other servers."

Torben Prang

Director of IT and Infrastructure, NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics

Responding to market demand

NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics found that offering to run customers' SAP landscapes on IBM Power Systems and IBM FlashSystem storage has opened the door to sales opportunities that would previously have been unattainable.
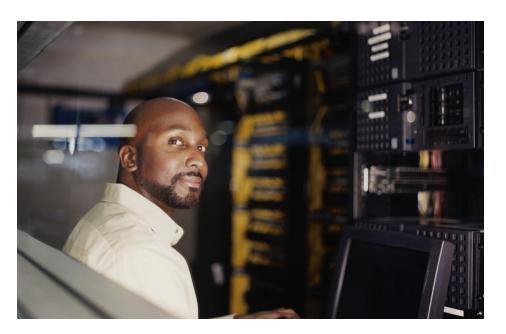
Dannie Lynge Havgaard, Nordic Sales Director, Managed Services at NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics, recalls, "Outsourcing an IT environment is a huge decision for any customer. We are putting our business-critical systems in the hands of a third party, so we want to be absolutely sure that they will run smoothly and reliably."

Dannie Lynge Havgaard continues,"Many potential clients see third-party data centers as a black box, which has made many major companies throughout the Nordic region hesitant to outsource their SAP environments. We found that offering IBM infrastructure was a game-changer: many of these companies had run their SAP applications on IBM servers and storage for many years and had great trust in the technology's resiliency and reliability. Being able to tell clients that we can run their SAP applications on IBM hardware puts their minds at ease and has helped us close deals that otherwise would not have been possible."

Dannie Lynge Havgaard says, "In this environment, the excellent SLAs underpinned by IBM Power Systems and IBM FlashSystem have often been the key factor that has swung the decision in our favor and differentiated us from our competitors."

Reaching into new markets

Deploying IBM Power Systems with IBM FlashSystem for its SAP hosting has enabled NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics to transform its capabilities and provide an even better service to its clients, while keeping costs down.

Dannie Lynge Havgaard elaborates, "Using IBM Power Systems and IBM FlashSystem has made a major difference to our work with clients in several ways. Perhaps foremost among these is the improved performance and availability we can offer for SAP applications powered by SAP HANA on IBM Power Systems and IBM FlashSystem. This enables customers to run critical SAP applications faster and add more value for their business."

"There are real technical benefits that we have found running SAP HANA on IBM Power Systems that we simply could not achieve with the servers offered by other vendors."

Torben Prang

Director of IT and Infrastructure,

NTT DATA Business

Solutions Nordics

One of the IT service provider's longest client relationships is with a leading transport manufacturer. NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics managed the implementation of the company's SAP Business Suite applications over a decade ago and has provided the client with IT services ever since. Recently, the company decided to migrate its SAP ERP applications to SAP HANA on IBM Power Systems, in order to strengthen its analytics capabilities.

The results have been significant. Previously, the company needed ten hours to generate reports on manufacturing using SAP. After moving to the SAP HANA database and IBM Power Systems, the company can produce the same reports in less than 30 minutes—a time saving of 95 percent.

NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics has also benefited from the flexibility of IBM Power Systems, as well as the solution's low maintenance requirements and ease of provisioning new virtual servers, which can now be built 60 percent faster than previously. The company also expects operating costs associated with power consumption, cooling and licensing to be 30 percent lower than with other vendors.

Dannie Lynge Havgaard continues, "The scalability of IBM Power Systems means that we can design a virtual server for an individual client, and customize it to the smallest details. Previously, we had to create a virtual server with a fixed (or static or over-provisioned) amount of RAM. This development is a major benefit for clients, as now they only pay for exactly what they need."

Dannie Lynge Havgaard says, "Both IBM Power Systems and IBM FlashSystem are much easier to manage than other solutions that we have used, which enables our staff to spend more of their time helping customers. We can also provision new virtual servers in hours rather than days or weeks, so our clients enjoy highly responsive service and our technical teams save time."

Building on its success, NTT DATA Business Solutions Nordics plans to migrate more of its clients' SAP applications running on SAP HANA to IBM Power Systems. Additionally, as many customers run SAP applications on older databases, the company is seeking to migrate SAP applications running on other databases onto IBM Power Systems, to take full advantage of the benefits that the IBM servers offer.

The company is also exploring the potential benefits of integrating artificial intelligence into its offering through IBM Watson. Possible solutions include a virtual assistant that will use machine learning to take on responsibility for routine tasks in interactions with customers, employees, partners and suppliers. For example, the virtual assistant will be able to help clients make product orders. This would reduce the burden on the service center and save clients time.

Torben Prang concludes, "Deploying IBM Power Systems and IBM FlashSystem has been transformational for our business—our offering has grown to the extent that we are now able to expand into new markets and reach new customers. We look forward to developing our capabilities further with IBM and providing even better services to a broader range of clients."

Learn more, connect with IBM 🐦 **and SAP** 🐦