IBM

SCHWENK

Business challenge

As SCHWENK Zement KG continues to expand in its core business areas, increased activity threatened to overwhelm its supporting business systems, potentially damaging growth prospects.

Transformation

Expansion in core business areas put pressure on SCHWENK Zement KG systems' 24 hour availability. By migrating mission-critical SAP application databases to an IBM System zEnterprise BC12 server running DB2 for z/OS, SCHWENK has achieved extremely high availability – and top productivity.

Business benefits:

Assures
future growth with up to 99.999% system availability

Eliminates
paper-based processes boosting business efficiency

Reduces
operational costs with streamlined workflows and mobile apps

SCHWENK Zement
Building a rock-solid foundation for future growth

Based in Ulm, Germany, family-owned group SCHWENK Zement KG manufactures cement and construction concrete for the building industry. With products sold primarily in Germany and Namibia, as well as in parts of Europe, SCHWENK employs about 3,150 people and generated annual revenues of around EUR800 million (approximately USD917 million) in 2013.

"IBM DB2 on zEnterprise BC12 enables us to keep operations running smoothly, 24 hours a day."

Wolfgang Monz, Head of IT, SCHWENK Zement KG

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High performance guaranteed at all times

SCHWENK Zement KG primarily focuses on the German market and is steadily building out its customer base, selling cement and other specialized construction materials. SCHWENK also opened a factory in Namibia – the first cement works in the country – creating an African export hub offering huge potential opportunities for the company.

SCHWENK relies on integrated SAP applications to run almost every aspect of its business operations, and SAP ERP and SAP Business Warehouse solutions deliver a unified overview of production, procurement and delivery processes.

Andreas Nischwitz, System Manager System z at SCHWENK, elaborates: "In recent years, additional growth in the use of SAP applications has put increasing pressure on our systems. Driven by our international expansion into Namibia and the implementation of new applications, such as SAP Customer Relationship Management for our sales teams with the SAP CRM Sales mobile app, we found that on too many occasions the systems were unavailable, perhaps due to outages or necessary maintenance."

He continues: "For SCHWENK to meet stringent internal service-level agreements, as well as production and delivery targets, it is critical that systems run round the clock, no matter what. It became clear that we needed to re-evaluate our IT environment to secure continued high performance and staff productivity at existing business units, as well as ensuring that we could cope with business growth."

Solid foundation for quick-moving business

SCHWENK was using IBM DB2 databases on IBM z Systems™ in combination with IBM Systems Storage® technology to run its SAP landscape. Based on this experience of the impressive reliability, availability and scalability of the IBM solutions, SCHWENK decided to upgrade to an IBM zEnterprise BC12 server with IBM DB2® for z/OS® to support its mission-critical SAP ERP, SAP CRM and SAP Business Warehouse applications and ensure business operations.

For improved business continuity, SCHWENK deployed two IBM System Storage DS8870 solutions at geographically separated data centers, and implemented IBM MetroMirror to provide synchronous long-distance data copies.

Working closely with IBM Global Technology Services®, SCHWENK completed the database migration of its SAP ERP applications and new SAP CRM instance quickly and easily, with minimal impact on end-users or the business.

Wolfgang Monz, Head of IT at SCHWENK Zement, states: "The migration was very smooth and, having worked with IBM in the past, we are highly confident that the z Systems solution will deliver the levels of performance and availability we need."

Andreas Nischwitz comments: "By using IBM DB2 on z/OS database management technology, we know that we can rely on the robust z Systems solution to support our operations 24 hours a day, with no unplanned downtime."

SCHWENK deployed IBM FlashCopy for quick data backup, using the IBM Systems Storage TS7740 Virtualization Engine and IBM Systems Storage TS3500 Tape Library solutions for long-term archiving with IBM enterprise tape technology. To ensure that SCHWENK could recover operations even in the highly unlikely event of server hardware outage, the company teamed with IBM Global Technology Services to establish a cost-efficient recovery plan. In the event of disaster, SCHWENK can recover operational data quickly and resume full operations.

Building block for future expansion

With its core business areas growing steadily, it is important that SCHWENK is able to manage increased business volumes easily and cost-effectively – and the scalability of the IBM z Systems plays a key role for the company.

Andreas Nischwitz remarks: "IBM z Systems with IBM z/OS offers excellent performance, absolute reliability and tremendous scalability.

"By enabling us to scale up capacity, rather than scaling out on other platforms, the IBM solution ensures we have the ability to grow without the need for additional server investments or system administrators. As well as giving us great cost-benefit advantage, this gives us a long-term roadmap that meets our business needs."

Wolfgang Monz adds: "We are very satisfied with the performance of our new IBM zEnterprise BC12 system, which helps keep operations running smoothly. Today, we can support our business reliably with up to 99.999 percent system availability without taking into account planned upgrades. IBM DB2 for z/OS on zEnterprise BC12 ensures that we can keep operations running smoothly across all business units, 24 hours a day, with just a small IT team. This enables staff to meet demanding internal service-level agreements, ensuring SCHWENK can deliver products and services on time and continue to grow."

With the new SAP solutions such as the SAP CRM Sales mobile app powered by IBM DB2 on IBM z Systems, SCHWENK has started to digitize previously paper-based processes, including procurement, controlling and delivery tasks, which help to reduce operational costs significantly.

Additionally, new reporting capabilities enable SCHWENK to identify potential bottlenecks, analyze business efficiency effectively and improve customer service.

Wolfgang Monz concludes: "Once again, IBM z Systems and IBM z/OS turned out to be a cost-efficient platform for our business-critical workloads. We are highly confident that, thanks to its easy scalability and outstanding reliability, IBM z Systems will continue supporting SCHWENK and our growing SAP application landscape in the long-term, as operations continue to expand."

Solution components

- IBM® System Storage® DS8870
- IBM System Storage TS3500 Tape Library
- IBM System Storage TS7740 Virtualization Engine
- IBM System zEnterprise® BC12
- IBM DB2® for z/OS®
- IBM FlashCopy®
- IBM MetroMirror
- IBM z/OS
- IBM Global Financing
- IBM Global Technology Services®
- SAP Customer Relationship Management
- SAP CRM Sales
- SAP ERP
- SAP ERP Human Capital Management
- SAP Business Warehouse
- SAP Real Estate Management

Take the next step

To learn more about IBM z Systems, contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/systems/z

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