IBM

VITEC

Business challenge

Wholesalers, retailers and buyers of automotive spare parts wanted new ways to connect with Vitec AutoData's platform—how could the company satisfy customer demands and deliver even better services?

Transformation

To swiftly source replacement parts, automobile repair shops in Norway can connect with manufacturers and wholesalers via a dedicated trading platform run by Vitec AutoData. With demand growing and customer expectations changing, the company wanted to ensure greater scalability while cutting TCO for its core infrastructure.

Geir Erland Fladby
System Administrator

Business benefits

Reduces
total cost of ownership of IT architecture for years to come

Strengthens
the scalability, security and reliability of critical services

Facilitates
easy on-boarding of new clients

Vitec AutoData

Gives clients easier access to critical services while cutting its own TCO

Established in 1979 and headquartered in Oslo, technology company Vitec AutoData provides hosted and managed IT solutions to importers, wholesalers and retailers of automotive parts and components, offering a full package of solutions across sales, procurement, billing, accounts receivable and accounts payable.

"Building a virtualized server farm with SUSE Linux Enterprise Server on the IBM System z13s provides us with a scalable and cost-effective solution."

—Geir Erland Fladby, System Administrator, Vitec AutoData

Share this

New customers, new expectations

When your auto repair shop needs to source a spare part to fix your car they turn to specialist automotive parts trading platforms where they can find every nut and bolt imaginable from dedicated retailers and wholesalers. Not only do buyers use such platforms—retailers, traders and wholesalers do too.

Geir Erland Fladby, System Administrator at Vitec AutoData, says: "Vitec AutoData provides hosting and managed services to importers, wholesalers and retailers of automotive parts—in essence, we provide a comprehensive platform for them to trade on: everything from connecting buyers and sellers, to helping clients make sure their stock matches demand. With this business model, we have enjoyed decades of success and are always looking for new ways to diversify our services and adapt to the changing marketplace.

"For most of our clients, the cost of owning and maintaining an in-house data center is prohibitive. With Vitec

AutoData, our clients have access to a full package of solutions across sales, procurement, billing, accounts receivable and accounts payable. To deliver high-end, professional services we invest in top-of-the-range technology and develop our skills in-house."

Gurbinder Singh, Developer at Vitec AutoData, adds: "Traditionally, our clients have connected with our services through virtual 3270 terminals, however as our client base grows, we are seeing the need to adapt to evolving customer expectations. Increasingly, our clients are showing a preference for connecting to our services via front-end web applications or APIs."

To meet these changing expectations and gain scalability to support ongoing business growth, Vitec AutoData looked to refresh its IT architecture, to ensure that it continues to provide highly secure, scalable, compatible and reliable services.

Upgrading capacity, boosting capability

Having used IBM® zEnterprise® 114 (z114) for a number of years, Vitec AutoData approached IBM to explore ways the company could refresh and re-architect its data center.

Geir Erland Fladby continues: "We have been using our z114 server to run our mission-critical operations for some time now, and find the reliability, flexibility, security and performance of the z Systems® platform to be a perfect fit for our business model. For this reason, we have decided to upgrade to a new IBM System z13s™."

"We are long-term users of the IBM z/VSE® operating system, and a few years ago we started to use IBM z/VM® virtualization technology and SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for z Systems. We moved to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server in order to meet open market requirements and obtain a more flexible and less costly platform on which to develop new applications and customer environments."

Vitec AutoData uses its IBM z/VSE partition to run and develop its core applications in COBOL and CICS. To complement these core services, and to support new front-end applications connecting to them, Vitec AutoData now runs around 25 instances of SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for z Systems as guests on a z/VM partition.

Gurbinder Singh explains: "We are continuing to migrate our data center from the old z114 to the new z13s. Testing everything on the z13s, before

we use it for production, helps us to ensure the best arrangement for our IT environment. In our new landscape, we will not only be migrating our 25 Linux virtual servers, we will also be adding a second Integrated Facility for Linux [IFL] engine so that we can scale up our services without delay as the business grows."

For storage, Vitec AutoData has selected an IBM DS8884 array and will use IBM Metro Mirror (peer-to-peer remote copy) on a one-off basis to move the production data from its existing IBM array. It will then physically move its existing IBM tape library to the new data center, where it will be used to back up data stored on the new DS8884.

Vitec AutoData has been using Linux on z Systems as a target for migrating systems away from Windows, as Geir Erland Fladby explains: "We decided to move away from Windows for two

main reasons. First, Linux is much more cost-efficient, as it means that we have very low licensing costs. Second, running Linux enables us to utilize the free, open resources of the Linux community. An added bonus of the Linux system is that it runs incredibly efficiently on the IBM z Systems platform."

Geir Erland Fladby notes: "In our z114 mainframe we have, essentially, built a virtualized server farm in a box, and we will have the same environment—only more scalable—when we migrate to our new z13s. Arranging our architecture this way yields significant benefits: in technical terms, it means that data can be transferred at memory speed between our IBM z/VSE partition and our Linux virtual servers without the latency or security issues of passing across a physical network connection."

Accelerating performance, reducing costs

Once Vitec AutoData has fully migrated its IT systems to its new IBM System z13s, the company expects to make significant cost savings, further improve system performance and achieve greater agility. The new IBM enterprise server will enable Vitec AutoData to scale to meet increased demand and create new ways for its clients to connect to its services.

"Our new IBM z13s enables us to provide faster, more varied services to our clients with simplicity and ease. And we are ready for the future, with sufficient capacity to grow our services in line with increased demand."

—Gurbinder Singh, Developer, Vitec AutoData

Vitec AutoData will use new applications and new tools on Linux for z Systems, such as Apache Tomcat, MariaDB, SQLlite, open source languages, GNU development tools, the optimized decimal floating point library libdfp, and the CVS Concurrent Versioning System.

Geir Erland Fladby elaborates: "Building a virtualized server farm with SUSE Linux Enterprise Server on the IBM System z13s provides us with a scalable and cost-effective solution for the long term. Indeed, we will achieve a much lower total cost of ownership than ever before, as we will have significantly reduced our software licensing and subscription costs by moving to SUSE Linux on z Systems."

"What's more, we will be much better equipped to provide our clients with even higher levels of service. With IBM z Systems, we can ensure 24/7 always-on availability, incredibly high reliability and super-high performance."

Gurbinder Singh adds: "Deploying new web-based applications for our customers to connect to our services is much easier with Linux on z Systems than with Windows on distributed servers. For instance, we can set up a new environment within minutes by firing up a virtual server on z/VM and using the SUSE YaST tool to configure it. In this way, we quickly on-board new clients and provide them with a connection to our services that suits their needs."

Gurbinder Singh concludes: "Our new IBM z13s enables us to provide faster, more varied services to our clients with simplicity and ease. And we are ready for the future, with sufficient capacity to grow our services in line with increased demand. IBM technology has not only enabled us to streamline our offering, it has provided the platform for us to access and actively participate in the open source community."

Solution components

- IBM® DS8884
- IBM System z13s™
- IBM z/VM®
- IBM z/VSE®
- SUSE Linux Enterprise Server

Connect with us

Take the next step
To learn more about IBM z Systems, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website:
ibm.com/systems/z/hardware/z13s.html

ZSC03354-USEN-00