



HANSA-FLEX

Gaining the flexibility to grow and diversify globally with IBM and SAP

Overview

The need

HANSA-FLEX, a hydraulics specialist, differentiates itself through the speed of its logistics processes. But as its business grew, how could it ensure that its SAP landscape would keep up the pace?

The solution

To boost scalability and flexibility, HANSA-FLEX migrated its SAP ERP applications onto a new infrastructure, built on IBM® Power® System 824 servers running the IBM i operating system.

The benefit

The solution improves business flexibility, enabling faster response to new demands. It also runs analytics queries 56 percent faster, while cutting operating costs and increasing staff productivity.

Hydraulic technology is increasingly important in all kinds of manufacturing processes, and when a crucial hydraulic system needs repair or replacement, manufacturers cannot afford to wait. To help its clients keep their production lines up and running at all times, HANSA-FLEX strives to deliver its range of 95,000 high-quality products within less than 24 hours.

To achieve this level of performance, efficient stock management and advanced logistics are essential. For this reason, HANSA-FLEX uses SAP ERP applications to help it operate a global network of branches and a fleet of express vehicles that enable its technicians to respond rapidly to failures and maintenance requests – and ensure that that clients' operations do not grind to a standstill when spare parts are urgently needed.

Jürgen Kaemena, Head of IT at HANSA-FLEX says, “Our customers rely on our quick service. Their production equipment must run safely, reliably and 24/7. Stock availability and fast distribution are the key factors that differentiate us from the competition: by delivering and installing our products quickly, we can limit the impact and expense of production downtime.”

Based on this successful business model, HANSA-FLEX has been continuously growing its business into new markets and expanding its range of products and services.



“As the business is constantly developing and changing, our new IBM POWER8 infrastructure with the latest release of IBM i gives us the space and freedom to add new SAP solutions as and when we need to – and helps us maintain our reputation for getting the right products to the right customers at the right time,” says Jürgen Kaemena, Head of IT, HANSA-FLEX.

Solution components

Hardware

- IBM® Power® System S824
- IBM FlashSystem™ 840
- IBM Storwize® V7000
- IBM SAN96B-5
- IBM System Storage® TS3310 Tape Library

Software

- IBM i
- IBM PowerVM® Enterprise Edition
- IBM System Storage SAN Volume Controller, also known as IBM Spectrum Virtualize

Applications

- SAP ERP
- SAP ERP Human Capital Management
- SAP NetWeaver Master Data Management
- SAP Global Trade Services
- SAP Business Warehouse
- SAP Process Orchestration
- SAP Process Integration

Services

- IBM Global Financing

IBM Business Partner

- BLUE Consult GmbH
 - BLUE STEC GmbH
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“We need to be able to react to new requirements and challenges in a cost-effective way – and that means we need an IT infrastructure that can scale with the needs of the business,” explains Jürgen Kaemena. “Over seven years of business growth, our production database has tripled in size to almost 9 TB, and performance was beginning to suffer. To minimize disruption and improve and maintain high levels of customer service, we had to create a more flexible environment that would support our growth.”

Gaining flexibility with complete virtualization

HANSA-FLEX worked with IBM Business Partner BLUE Consult and BLUE STEC to redesign its IT architecture. To support its mission-critical SAP ERP, SAP ERP Human Capital Management, SAP Global Trade Services and SAP Business Warehouse applications, HANSA-FLEX decided to deploy two IBM Power System S824 servers with IBM POWER8 processors running IBM i 7.2 and the integrated IBM DB2® for i database.

Thomas Becker, Team Manager SAP Basis and Infrastructure at HANSA-FLEX explains, “Our previous server landscape, which was based on larger, monolithic servers, needed regular upgrades, which could lead to downtime. Now we have a more flexible, modular configuration, where we can expand capacity as needed with minimal impact on our 12 production systems.”

Jürgen Kaemena adds, “We chose IBM i because it allows us to run SAP applications for more than 2,200 users reliably with high performance – and the environment is easy to manage with a small IT team.”

BLUE STEC assisted HANSA-FLEX in the implementation, and ensured that the transition ran smoothly. Jürgen Kaemena says, “With help from BLUE STEC, we completed the upgrade to IBM i 7.2 on the IBM POWER8 system without issues. Our SAP applications have been running very reliably since the upgrade, and performance has improved significantly. IBM and BLUE STEC provided competent support throughout the project and continue to help us optimize our IT environment.”

To streamline its IT landscape, HANSA-FLEX implemented a virtualized storage landscape based on IBM System Storage SAN Volume Controller. Thomas Becker elaborates, “With IBM SAN Volume Controller, we have created a single storage environment for all internal platforms. Today, the IBM Power Systems servers and our Windows environment rely on the same storage solution. Using IBM Easy Tier technology, the storage virtualization appliance automatically distributes our data across ultra-fast IBM FlashSystem 840 with MicroLatency technology and general-purpose IBM Storwize V7000 storage systems to maximize application performance on both server platforms without manual tuning.”

To respond more flexibly to changing demands and keep operating costs predictably low, HANSA-FLEX agreed different leasing cycles for the IBM components with IBM Global Financing.

“The combination of SAP software, IBM POWER8 technology and IBM i helps us ensure on-time delivery.”

— Jürgen Kaemena, Head of IT, HANSA-FLEX

Quick off the mark with improved business processes

HANSA-FLEX now has an IT infrastructure that enables the business to be more flexible in accommodating growth and new requirements. As a result, the company can respond to customer demands and market developments quicker and more efficiently.

“We are now able to identify and deal with potential bottlenecks in our environment before they affect performance,” says Jürgen Kaemena. “Thanks to the excellent scalability of the IBM POWER8 processors and our modular system architecture, we can address capacity shortages immediately and on-the-fly without any noticeable delays. This is an enormous aid when it comes to providing round-the-clock access to mission-critical SAP applications to our 1,400 concurrent users, as the requirements of the business are increasing all the time.”

In particular, the improved performance of the new IBM infrastructure, including server and storage technologies, gives HANSA-FLEX faster access to the product data in its SAP environment. Thomas Becker elaborates, “Response times have been improved by 56 percent, helping to improve productivity for our staff. We benefit from 55 percent faster processing of background tasks, and database processing alone was accelerated by up to 70 percent. Meanwhile, a significant increase in Java performance speeds up all our SAP applications noticeably from the point of view of the end users.”

Jürgen Kaemena concludes, “Better all-round performance in the SAP environment means we can manage complex tasks such as annual reporting more efficiently. As the business is constantly developing and changing, IBM technology gives us the freedom to add new SAP applications and functionalities cost-efficiently with a small IT team whenever we need new solutions to streamline our business processes.”

About HANSA-FLEX

HANSA-FLEX is a leading global supplier of hydraulics components. Headquartered in Bremen, the company operates 393 branches and a fleet of 302 rapid-response service vans in 36 countries. HANSA-FLEX employs 3,394 people and generated a turnover of EUR405 million (USD453.51 million) in 2014.

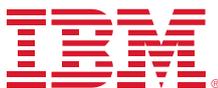
About BLUE STEC

BLUE STEC GmbH is a technical consultancy and service provider specializing in SAP technology. Its team of SAP technology experts performs implementations, manages projects, and supports its clients with intelligent and innovative solutions and services.

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BM Deutschland GmbH
IBM-Allee 1
71139 Ehningen
Deutschland
ibm.com/de

IBM Österreich
Obere Donaustrasse 95
1020 Wien
ibm.com/at

IBM Schweiz
Vulkanstrasse 106
8010 Zürich
ibm.com/ch

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