Business Challenge

Faced with strict building regulations, new housing policies and economic uncertainty, property managers constantly seek to streamline operations. How could IT service provider PROMOS help?

Transformation

With IBM Platinum Business Partner PROFI, PROMOS deployed SAP S/4HANA® and easysquare mobile on IBM Power® Systems and IBM Storage, providing super-efficient service to help clients raise profitability.

Volker Schulz
CIO
PROMOS

Business benefits:

80%
fewer servers streamlines operations and optimizes infrastructure investments

50%
faster access to actionable insights despite growing data volumes

25%
better business application performance during peak times

PROMOS

Innovative digital and mobile services help property managers through turbulent times

PROMOS (external link), headquartered in Berlin, Germany, is an IBM Platinum Business Partner and leading IT consulting and solutions provider to the real estate industry. With 250 highly qualified and experienced consultants, PROMOS implements SAP S/4HANA and develops its own easysquare mobile (external link) app platform. Leveraging strong partnerships with IBM, IBM Platinum Business Partner PROFI and SAP, the company focuses on modern standard software and innovative technology solutions that add value to its real estate customers' businesses.

"It's great to see how our new IBM Power Systems solution helps improve staff productivity for 3,500 SAP business users in our private cloud."

Volker Schulz, CIO, PROMOS

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Winning in a dynamic market

Continued urbanization means that cities around the world are growing fast, presenting property developers, real estate companies and facility managers with new opportunities – and new challenges. Furthermore, the property sector has been particularly hard hit by the economic uncertainty brought about by the coronavirus crisis. Policies introduced by local governments such as deferred rent payments and rent capping will likely put further strain on the finances of the property sector.

Volker Schulz, CIO at PROMOS, an IT solutions provider to the German property industry, remarks, "Many of our clients are based in Berlin, where there is huge demand for new-built flats at affordable prices. Urban planning policy requires that our clients must consider the impact on local infrastructure, and include schools and nurseries, when building new apartment complexes. With construction cycles extended by regulations and significant project complexity, commercial property managers face great pressure on their profitability."

He continues, "One way to tackle the challenges is to boost agility and operational efficiency by taking full advantage of digital innovation, with intelligent workflows that empower faster decision making. To help our clients drive profitability, we looked for ways to deliver an expanded range of services, with greater flexibility, and delivery at lower costs."

> "We can replace a large number of clients' legacy systems with SAP S/4HANA. Running SAP S/4HANA on IBM Power Systems provides our clients with a simplified IT landscape and a future-proof solution that we can adapt and scale to meet business requirements."
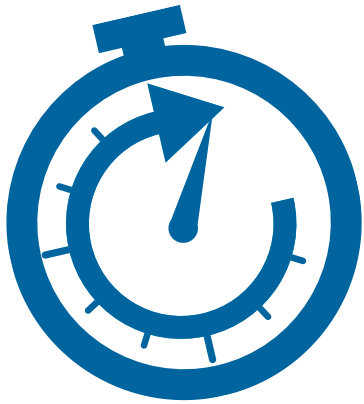
Volker Schulz

CIO

PROMOS

Modernizing IT to innovate and grow

With many years of experience in the industry, PROMOS offers a broad range of SAP software for its property clients, including SAP S/4HANA, SAP ERP® and SAP Fiori®, running on IBM Power Systems with IBM Storage. The company also offers a custom-developed mobile app running on the easysquare mobile (external link) platform, that connects tenants to property companies and suppliers.

The PROMOS team realized that its existing IT infrastructure, consisting of 28 systems, would struggle to handle expanded services and greater workloads, and would be costly to extend and support. PROMOS looked to simplify its IT landscape, increase capacity and performance, and create a system with the flexibility to handle application modernization through the deployment of exponential technologies.

PROMOS decided to consolidate and upgrade its private cloud infrastructure by moving to two IBM Power System E980 and two IBM Power System E950 servers, with IBM PowerVM® and SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for SAP Applications (external link), to run key SAP S/4HANA and SAP HANA applications for its clients.

"We have relied on IBM Power Systems with IBM Storage to support operations for many years," says Volker Schulz. "IBM technology provides us with a solid foundation for our managed SAP services and enables us to meet demanding SLAs for our clients. For us, IBM Power System stands for reliability, scalability and security. IBM Power Systems in combination with IBM Storage gives us the flexibility and resiliency to support our clients in any situation."

PROMOS' decision to move to the new IBM POWER9 processor-based servers was supported by its long-term technology partner, PROFI (external link). "We have worked with IBM Platinum Business Partner PROFI for more than 15 years," says Volker Schulz. "While we certainly have a lot of knowledge

Accelerates business application response times by 25%

in-house, we rely on PROFI for strategic and operational advice. PROFI has been very supportive, helping us with sizing and configuration of our new systems, and validating the business case. PROFI also set up the Capacity on Demand agreements, enabling us to dynamically activate and pay for resources exactly and only as needed, a central feature of the solution's cost-efficiency."

PROFI also helped PROMOS implement a fully virtualized storage solution based on IBM Spectrum® Virtualize software with IBM FlashSystem® storage. PROMOS also relies on the modern data protection capabilities within IBM Spectrum Protect to back up mission-critical data and recover systems rapidly in the event of

unplanned downtime, offering essential business protection.

Volker Schulz adds, "IBM Power Systems enterprise servers have proven to be a highly reliable, future-forward infrastructure. The ability to run both IBM AIX and the Linux operating system within a single server using IBM's advanced virtualization technology gives us the flexibility we need to respond to client requirements rapidly, without compromising performance and stability."

Streamlining business applications

Typical clients benefitting from PROMOS' new cloud service are among the largest real estate companies in Germany, managing thousands of private and commercial properties.

Volker Schulz remarks, "Our clients provide homes and workspaces for millions of residents. Our goal is to support sustainable development and growth. For our clients to be able to provide high-quality services to tenants and maintain affordable living costs, they rely on integrated, streamlined digital workflows, which is why we offer business

Benefits in detail

- Reducing the number of systems from 28 to just four modernizes the IT landscape, streamlining operations and minimizing maintenance workload

- Moving to IBM POWER9 processor-based servers results in 50% better database and business analytics performance despite growing data volumes, providing rapid and actionable insights

- Accelerates business application response times by 25% during peak times, increasing staff productivity for 3,500 business users

- Consolidates resources to a private cloud that boosts cost-effectiveness and enables business growth, focusing efforts on industry and technical expertise

- Unlocks business value with integrated, modern business applications, and supports data-driven decision-making by improving usability, eliminating data duplication, and reducing data input errors for better data consistency

- Supports innovation and reduces time to value, with fast digital customer services and seamless workflows for 70,000 mobile app users, helping them to realize digital transformation business cases

- Improves business continuity with a high level of data protection combined with rapid recovery processes

modernization by replacing ageing legacy systems with SAP S/4HANA, hosted and managed by us."

Right from the start of the implementation, PROMOS focuses on operational efficiency, as Volker Schulz explains, "We can replace a large number of clients' legacy systems with SAP S/4HANA. The technical challenges to leverage the speed of in-memory computing in production operations are often underestimated. Running SAP S/4HANA on IBM Power Systems provides our clients with a simplified IT landscape and a future-proof solution that we can adapt and scale to meet business requirements."

Building a business on IBM technology

PROMOS also developed its easysquare mobile platform on IBM Power Systems using the IBM AIX operating system, IBM Db2 database technology and Java development environments, including IBM WebSphere Application Server.

"Our easysquare mobile solution provides our clients, as well as their tenants and tradespeople, with easy access to contracts, bills and other information on the go," remarks Volker Schulz. "It also provides details on the handover of residential properties, building acceptance and progress tracking, form approval workflows, and networking features designed to help strengthen local communities."

A key differentiator of the PROMOS mobile platform is the easysquare workflow (external link) plug-in solution that provides seamless and secure integration with SAP S/4HANA. Volker Schulz notes,

"Connecting directly to SAP business applications significantly reduces manual tasks. We can use all SAP business data in real-time, without any data replication or other process and data duplication. By hosting both the SAP and easysquare software on IBM Power Systems, we have reduced complexity and significantly streamlined our workflows."

Improving business agility and accelerating data-driven decision making

Moving to integrated, innovative and modern business applications helps PROMOS' clients optimize their

business processes to deliver sustained business value.

"Running SAP S/4HANA on IBM Power Systems and IBM Storage has been a major enabler," confirms Volker Schulz. "Nobody likes to work with outdated spreadsheets. New business applications provide a much better user experience, and improved performance facilitates faster, data-driven decision making. By helping clients to eliminate duplication in processes and data management, we can help to improve data consistency, reduce user errors, and boost staff productivity."

Volker Schulz adds, "Targeting SAP S/4HANA right from the start allowed us to gain practical experience of keeping the solution lean and current. We routinely

offer SAP S/4HANA upgrades as part of our service, enabling clients to benefit from the latest features and improvements."

He continues, "This approach ensures continuous process innovation, by making new intelligent features available more rapidly. And we can provide this service quickly and cost-effectively thanks to the flexibility and scalability of IBM Power Systems and IBM Storage."

Achieving tangible, measurable results

By consolidating its IBM Power Systems landscape, PROMOS has optimized its infrastructure investments. Volker Schulz elaborates, "With our partner PROFI we

redesigned our private cloud architecture and replaced 28 servers with just four new POWER9 processor-based systems, cutting procurement and lifecycle management by 80 percent. Consolidation to IBM Power Systems has significantly streamlined system administration and maintenance tasks in our data center."

Thanks to performance improvements and the outstanding virtualization features of IBM PowerVM, PROMOS boosted cost-efficiency across approximately 25 client environments. The security and performance of IBM Power Systems and IBM Storage lets PROMOS run core business applications for all its clients centrally in its private cloud. The company takes advantage of Capacity on Demand to maintain top performance even at peak times.

Deploying IBM POWER9 processor-based servers has accelerated SAP S/4HANA performance by 25 percent at peak times. "It's great to see how our new IBM Power Systems solution helps improve staff productivity for 3,500 SAP business users in our private cloud," confirms Volker Schulz.

Despite ever-growing data volumes, the company has seen database

performance increase by 50 percent, accelerating complex business analytics queries to provide actionable insights to business users faster, supporting critical business decisions.

Scaling the business without limits

Using IBM Power Systems and IBM Storage technology has made it possible for PROMOS to shorten the time to value with a small system administration team when launching its mobile app platform. The IBM solution ensures that 70,000 app users benefit from fast digital customer services and seamless workflows, empowering PROMOS to push the boundaries of digital business transformation in the real estate industry.

Volker Schulz comments, "New levels of performance and an improved internal cost structure enabled by IBM Power Systems and IBM Storage give us the opportunity to unlock the value of SAP applications for more customers, and keep costs stable even as business demands increase. In addition, the flexibility of the IBM systems allows us to consider hybrid cloud deployments

to optimize our services and further increase agility."

He concludes, "Our clients don't ask for technology solutions and infrastructure details, they just want reliable business services. Working with PROFI and IBM, we have successfully delivered the business case for our private cloud and for our clients."

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CIO

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About the IBM and SAP Partnership

The strategic shift to the cloud and to intelligent technologies isn't easy, but it's how businesses of all sizes will create exceptional customer experiences, uncover new revenue opportunities, optimize investments and fundamentally reinvent how business gets done. SAP and IBM offer the innovations and industry expertise to help.

SAP provides the world's leading intelligent applications and technologies – connecting and clarifying the data that makes processes more nimble and decisions more powerful. IBM helps build smarter businesses and is a global leader in SAP transformations – offering in-depth industry experience, cloud and on-premise deployment expertise, and game-changing intelligent technologies.

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