



Dirk Rossmann GmbH

Gaining a competitive advantage by having key business figures available at all times

Overview

The need

Without timely access to sales data, managers at Rossmann drugstores were unable to plan effectively to keep their product range in line with consumer demands, which could lead to lost business.

The solution

Rossmann migrated its data warehouse reporting solution to Linux running on IBM® Power Systems™, utilizing the Capacity on Demand offering to ensure rapid response even during peak times.

The benefit

Rossmann's managers now make purchasing decisions based on up-to-date retail figures, ensuring product ranges match consumer preferences and maximizing sales revenues.

The drugstore market in Germany is highly competitive, with several big chains claiming their market share. Supermarkets and online stores also offer a range of similar products at competitive prices. How can drugstores stand out from the crowd?

For Dirk Rossmann GmbH, Germany's second largest drugstore chain, the key is aligning product range with consumer demand. To do so even in peak times, the company updated its IT infrastructure to ensure consistently fast response times. Equipped with up-to-the-minute retail figures, managers can make the purchasing decisions that suit Rossmann's customers.

Prioritizing the customer

To stay ahead of the game, understanding consumers' needs and preferences is crucial. Not having the full picture can mean that shelves are not optimally stocked and lead to consumer disappointment, and potentially to loss of customers.

Heike Köhler, Head of Data Center Operations at Dirk Rossmann GmbH, explains: "It was important for us to be able to process and access key sales data efficiently so that managers could make informed purchasing decisions for an ever larger number of stores. While we were expanding quickly, poor analytics performance was slowing down our business response, and it became clear that we needed to improve the speed and capacity of our reporting capabilities to increase productivity and continue to grow."

Over many years of working with IBM, Rossmann experienced great collaboration between IBM and its IT team. "We were always very satisfied with the excellent support from IBM for Linux on Power Systems. Whenever we have questions, we can count on IBM to get the answers we need very quickly," says Heike Köhler, Head of Data Center Operations, Dirk Rossmann GmbH.



Solution components

Hardware

- IBM® Power® 770
- IBM System Storage® DS8870
- IBM System Storage TS3500 Tape Library
- IBM System Storage SAN48B-5

Software

- IBM DB2® for i
 - IBM DB2 for Linux, UNIX, and Windows
 - IBM i
 - IBM Tivoli® Storage Manager
 - Red Hat Enterprise Linux for Power
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Improving scalability with Linux on Power Systems

Rossmann runs an ERP solution to manage the business, running the IBM i operating system on IBM Power Systems servers, and stores transactions in a separate data warehouse for in-depth analytics and reporting.

Heike Köhler comments, “The data warehouse, running on Windows on x86 servers, simply could not scale as required to support our operations, and we ended up migrating the systems about once every year, costing time and money. Additionally, the data backup process frequently over-ran, which meant that the systems were slowing down staff during business hours – yet sales, logistics and other departments demanded rapid availability of analytics capabilities at all times.”

To cure its data warehouse woes, Rossmann looked for a solution that would remove the need for frequent upgrades and migrations, and provide a scalable, high-performance data warehouse platform for the foreseeable future. Today, the company runs its ERP solution on IBM i with IBM DB2 for i software, and its data warehouse system on Red Hat Enterprise Linux with IBM DB2 for Linux, UNIX and Windows.

Michael Franke, System Administrator at Dirk Rossmann GmbH, takes up the story: “We found that IBM DB2, combined with Red Hat Enterprise Linux for Power Systems, delivers the capacity and scalability we need. Scalability and a stable system are important to us to be able to serve the business without disruptions, and IBM POWER technology has always played a big part in Rossmann’s success, giving us confidence that this was a great choice.”

Rossmann deployed the data warehouse and ERP systems on two IBM Power® 770 servers, featuring POWER7+™ processors. Located at two data centers, Rossmann runs a primary production server with manual failover to the second machine, which acts as backup, disaster recovery and development and test server.

Heike Köhler elaborates: “Using IBM FlashCopy technology, we accelerated backups from 15 hours to only five seconds – this is over 99.9 percent faster. Quick backups enable faster recovery and minimize business risk.”

IBM DB2 offers additional technical benefits, as Oliver Mensinger, Database Administrator at Dirk Rossmann GmbH, says, “IBM DB2 compression has reduced data volumes by up to 80 percent, and features such as Self-Tuning Memory Manager have helped to cut time spent on manual performance optimization by 50 percent. And with automated time-based table partitioning, we have substantially reduced table sizes, and now process only the data that our users actually need, delivering enormously faster response.”

“Running our data warehouse on DB2 with Linux on IBM Power Systems has increased IT efficiency, management productivity and cut costs.”

— Heike Köhler, Head of Data Center Operations, Dirk Rossmann GmbH

Gaining faster insights and minimizing risk

Thanks to high-speed data processing and shorter data-backup-times Rossmann’s managers can now make purchasing decisions fast and accurately, having an up-to-date view of key figures on sales and stock, and subsequently consumer preferences and market trends at all times, even during peak times.

Michael Franke explains: “Rossmann takes advantage of the IBM Capacity on Demand offering, which allows us to activate additional computing and memory resources instantly whenever we need them, without production downtime. The solution provides 50 percent faster access to analytics reports and shorter loading times. Sales and purchasing managers can now analyze large chunks of data and gain new insights faster, making on the spot decisions to help us maximize sales.”

Heike Köhler concludes: “Running our business warehouse on DB2 with Linux on IBM Power Systems has increased IT efficiency, management productivity and cut costs. Rossmann’s managers now make purchasing decisions based on up-to-date retail figures, ensuring product ranges match consumer preferences and maximizing sales revenues, enabling the next phase of the company’s growth.”

About Dirk Rossmann GmbH

Dirk Rossmann GmbH is Germany’s second largest drugstore chain. The company operates about 3,250 outlets across Europe, of which almost 2,000 are located in Germany, where 27,400 staff are employed. Rossmann manages 17,000 products and generates annual revenues of EUR7.2 billion (USD7.7 billion). The company plans to open an additional 155 new stores in Germany in 2015.

To learn more about Rossmann, visit: www.rossmann.de

For more information

To learn more about Linux on IBM Power Systems, contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/power/linux



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IBM 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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