



Photo: Knorr-Bremse AG

Business challenge

To grow profits and productivity, Knorr-Bremse wanted to integrate acquired companies into its SAP application landscape, but data growth was slowing analytics capabilities and pushing up costs.

Transformation

Knorr-Bremse implemented IBM® DB2® with BLU Acceleration to run its growing SAP Business Warehouse faster with in-memory technology without the need to invest in new infrastructure or training.



Marc Motejat
Director IT Technology & Infrastructure
Knorr-Bremse

Business benefits:

55 times
faster insights enable
real-time response to
changing markets

2.4 times
quicker analytics in
SAP Strategic Enterprise
Management

64 percent
additional data compression
reduces storage costs

Knorr-Bremse Supporting massive business growth on a global scale

The Knorr-Bremse Group is a leading manufacturer of braking systems for rail and commercial vehicles. Headquartered in Munich, Germany, Knorr-Bremse operates more than 100 production sites in 29 countries around the world and employs more than 23,900 people. The company achieved sales revenues of EUR5.2 billion (USD5.8 billion) in 2014.

“IBM DB2 with BLU Acceleration is the solution of choice for us to address our data growth challenges.”

Marc Motejat
Director IT Technology & Infrastructure
Knorr-Bremse

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Faster insights needed

One of the world's leading manufacturer of braking systems for rail and commercial vehicles, Knorr-Bremse makes an important contribution to travel safety. Every day, more than one billion people rely on its systems.

Knorr-Bremse has been increasing its global presence through acquisitions and joint ventures, and expanding its range of products for the automotive industry. To ensure it can successfully grow revenues and profits, Knorr-Bremse wanted to be able to integrate the acquired companies into existing business structures and processes as rapidly as possible. Knorr-Bremse runs its core business processes using SAP software, and the very large increase in data volumes was starting to impact analytics capabilities and system throughput, and infrastructure costs were rising.

The company realized that it needed the capability to deliver comprehensive performance reports more quickly to increase productivity. Marc Motejat, Director IT Technology & Infrastructure at Knorr-Bremse, says: "We are constantly aligning our business to the changing requirements of our agile group structure. It is essential that we can standardize processes across the group without slowing down decision-making at any level – or disrupting manufacturing and logistics workflows."



Photo: Knorr-Bremse AG

"One of the main advantages of IBM DB2 with BLU Acceleration is that we can roll it out step by step online and without downtime, ensuring operational processes are not disrupted."

Marc Motejat, Director IT Technology & Infrastructure, Knorr-Bremse

"Because we do not need to invest in any new infrastructure or licenses, the upgrade paid off immediately, helping us to cope with our growing SAP application landscape more easily."

Marc Motejat, Director IT Technology & Infrastructure, Knorr-Bremse



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Smooth migration without disruption

Knorr-Bremse operates 60 SAP systems in a fully virtualized private cloud environment based on VMware virtualization and SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, relying on IBM DB2 for Linux, UNIX and Windows to manage the underlying data. Some 9,500 users access these SAP solutions, including SAP Business Warehouse applications to gain better insight into the company's business processes.

In addition, the company takes advantage of SAP ERP applications, including SAP ERP Human Capital Management, SAP Supplier Relationship Management, SAP Supply Chain Management, SAP Advanced Planning and Optimization, SAP Supply Network Collaboration, SAP Process Integration and SAP Business Warehouse. Knorr-Bremse also recently implemented SAP Global Trade Services to automate and streamline trade processes.

As data volumes increased, both through acquired companies and through organic growth, Knorr-Bremse found that its analytics SAP Business Warehouse solutions were struggling to keep up with demand. The company looked for ways to increase capacity and improve response times. Working with IBM, Knorr-Bremse decided to upgrade to IBM DB2 with BLU Acceleration.

Marc Motejat adds: "After extensive testing, we created a project plan to activate BLU Acceleration for our mission-critical SAP Business Warehouse production systems. One of the main advantages of IBM DB2 with BLU Acceleration is that we can roll it out step by step online and without downtime, ensuring operational processes are not disrupted. The upgrade was straightforward and seamless.

"Because we do not need to invest in any new infrastructure or licenses, the upgrade paid off immediately, helping us to cope with our growing SAP application landscape more easily."

Reducing operating costs with minimum risk

Knorr-Bremse started using the BLU Acceleration features without changing or expanding its existing IT infrastructure or system administration workflows.

By implementing new data compression features, Knorr-Bremse has cut data volumes of already compressed data by up to 64 percent across all SAP Business Warehouse solutions. By activating BLU Acceleration, the company reduced the size of its largest analytics databases by a further 10 percent.

Marc Motejat comments: "For a company that grows as quickly as Knorr-Bremse, shrinking data volumes also immediately impacts operating costs. Equally, data compression in IBM DB2 with BLU Acceleration helps us to avoid investing in new storage systems.

"A big benefit is that we can continue to use our established and reliable operations processes and still benefit from the innovative in-memory technology. This makes IBM DB2 with BLU Acceleration the solution of choice for us – we do not need to integrate new systems into our IT environment and our administrators do not need to learn new tools. With IBM DB2 with BLU Acceleration operating within our virtualized environment, we can dynamically scale resources up and down as needed, without any impact on business users."

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Comprehensive reports generated in seconds

Marc Motejat elaborates: “Staff can run complex reports in seconds rather than minutes. For example, certain reports took 160 seconds to generate in the past. With IBM DB2 with BLU Acceleration, the information is available 17 times faster, in only nine seconds. Other SAP Business Warehouse reports run as much as 55 times faster.”

As a next step, Knorr-Bremse plans to activate BLU Acceleration for its SAP Strategic Enterprise Management application, which in pre-production testing shows 2.4 times faster response times.

Marc Motejat concludes: “IBM DB2 with BLU Acceleration enables us to provide better services for our business users. Rapid access to complex analyses is becoming more and more important, and we now have a solution that helps us to support ever-growing data volumes. IBM DB2 with BLU Acceleration enables quicker business insights to help us manage the group more efficiently.”



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Solution components

- IBM® DB2® with BLU Acceleration
- SAP ERP
- SAP ERP Human Capital Management
- SAP Strategic Enterprise Management
- SAP Global Trade Services
- SAP Supplier Relationship Management
- SAP Supply Chain Management
- SAP Supply Network Collaboration
- SAP Advanced Planning and Optimization
- SAP Process Integration
- SAP Business Warehouse

Take the next step

To learn more about IBM DB2 solutions, contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following websites: ibmbluhub.com and ibm.com/db2/linux-unix-windows/

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