

STADTWERKE SOEST TACKLES DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WITH SAP HANA® AND DELL EMC™

German energy supplier benefits from migration to SAP HANA



Energy Supply

Germany

Business Needs

With the help of IT service provider items, the municipal utility company Stadtwerke Soest has implemented the migration of its IT to SAP HANA and Dell EMC servers. The energy supplier now benefits from extremely short access times and has made its IT future-proof.

Solutions at a glance

- SAP HANA
- Dell EMC PowerEdge® FC630 with Intel® Xeon® E5-2600 v4 processors
- VMware virtualization

Business Results

- Enormous speed benefits due to the in-memory platform
- The system processes all workloads in real time
- Performance improvements for the industry-specific solution SAP IS-U module
- Reduced workload for employees
- Seamless productive operation

“Stadtwerke Soest was the first energy supply company in Germany to migrate its IS-U system to SAP HANA. At that time, there were no reference companies with experience in this area.”

Ralf Leufkes, SAP Technology Architect, items

Supplying a city with energy is the task of the respective municipal utility company. In order to ensure their future viability, energy suppliers have to adapt to the changing times. Digitization is an important step towards this goal, while at the same time presenting completely new challenges for municipal utility companies. SAP HANA, the SAP® development platform for software applications, plays a decisive role in the path to the future.

Stadtwerke Soest took on this challenge. According to items' own statement, it is the first energy supplier in Germany which has successfully migrated its IT environment to SAP HANA. However, it did not carry out this extensive process alone.

Instead, the municipal utility company relied on the experience of the IT service provider items, which focuses on providing IT support to energy suppliers. Since its foundation, the full-service IT provider and Dell EMC have been strategic hardware partners. For more than twenty years, Dell EMC has also been working closely with SAP and has successfully implemented hundreds of SAP solutions at companies in various sectors.

Seamless migration to SAP HANA

To operate a HANA-ready data center, items did not have to make any changes to its existing IT platform. Ralf Leufkes, SAP Technology Architect for items, says: „We are running our SAP HANA systems in TDI (Tailored Data Center Integration) on a completely virtualized platform consisting of Dell EMC blade systems with a SAN and VMware virtualisation. A total of six Dell EMC FC630 PowerEdge servers with Intel® Xeon® E5 2600 v4 processors are used, which are equipped with up to 1 TB of RAM.“

The technical migration to the HANA system and Dell EMC servers was implemented using the SAP Standard export and import functionalities. During the migration, which ran error-free over one weekend, items also changed the operating system simultaneously.

For Stadtwerke Soest, this resulted in a tangible advantage, as it now also benefits from the improved performance of the SAP IS-U module. This module is the Industry Solution for Utilities, an industry solution for energy suppliers. It expands the standard system to include additional industry-specific functions. But above all, it simplifies the billing of customers for energy delivery.



Long-standing partnership with Dell EMC

Dell EMC has been items' trusted hardware partner for data center infrastructure for many years. Based on items' positive experiences in previous close cooperation with Dell EMC on server operation and the virtualization of hyper-converged systems, items met with the SAP HANA experts from Dell EMC for an initial workshop to implement the new requirements.

Following this workshop, the existing infrastructure, standards and principles as well as the SAP requirements were analysed. A decision was made in favor of Tailored Data Center Integration, i.e. use of the existing infrastructure.

Ralf Leufkes is convinced by the solution: „This decision - which included the opportunity to adopt the TDI approach - shows that items has been operating and continually developing a future-ready data center with Dell EMC for years. This data center also meets the high requirements of SAP HANA.“

Extremely fast access times and unlimited possibilities

Stadtwerke Soest always bills for their energy deliveries on a specific date each year. In January 2017, they generated over 50,000 billing documents. The billing process was carried out for the first time using the new SAP HANA system, Dell EMC servers and the IS-U module on this date.

A major advantage of the new system is that it is significantly faster. This was primarily demonstrated by the fact that the billing process was completed much faster than with the previous system.

Stadtwerke Soest's conclusion after one year of productive operation: The new systems based on Dell EMC infrastructure are thoroughly convincing, due to high availability and performance. All B2B-ALE processes (Application Link Enabling) are running fast and stable. There are no performance bottlenecks in overnight batch processing.

The reduced coordination and planning efforts have also convinced the municipal utility company's employees. The positive feedback from the specialists is as follows: „No more slowing down“.

For example, reports and statistics run without any problems in dialog and technical problems are a thing of the past. In addition to this, the staff no longer needs to fear statistics being terminated, and annoyingly long waiting times are a thing of the past. The productivity of employees is now higher, because they complete their tasks more effectively, without becoming frustrated due to slow technology.

Before the changeover to the new system with SAP HANA and Dell EMC servers, a team of specially trained staff had to work on quality management and the correction processes for about three weeks. The new system allows savings of three weeks for these tasks on a yearly basis.

Overall, the savings potential across all employees and processes can be estimated at six man-months. Moreover, there are no additional costs for special add-ons that serve as workarounds for performance problems.

Digital foundation for the future

By migrating to SAP HANA and Dell EMC servers, Stadtwerke Soest is ideally prepared for the advancing digital transformation. This is because the technology from Dell EMC provides the perfect basis for both future projects and further development of existing SAP systems.

Stadtwerke Soest is planning the next optimizations in the areas of financial accounting and controlling. The introduction of SAP S/4HANA® Finance add-ons in the existing Business Suite is planned for the end of 2017. By then, an IS-U (IDEX) solution will also be available for the German market. The upgrade of the entire IT environment to the new S/4 line will be carried out in stages up to 2020.

“The old hardware and Oracle database required run times of 1.5 hours for consumption analyses. With the new technology from SAP and Dell EMC, these are completed at the touch of a button.”

Norbert Zyprian, CIO, Stadtwerke Soest



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