CASE STUDY

Schoenberger Group upgrades from NetApp to Tintri VMstore™

VMstore

Schoenberger Group, founded in 1878, is a leading German e-commerce company based in the south of Munich. The company manufactures sun shutters and recently became a global leader in the development, marketing, and selling of a wide range of sun protection products with advanced technology and automation for the business sector. The company holds over 100 patents for various designs, products, and applications. In the early 2000s, Schoenberger developed its online shops, which started the transformation from the original business, driven by manufacturing, to the modern e-commerce business Schoenberger is today.

As a result of the transformation, the company diversified into new markets expanding its presence. It achieved this by utilizing its core competencies in ecommerce, logistics, social media, multi-channel marketing, branding, and market research. Today, the company has more than 400 employees globally and generates revenues of over 100 million USD. In order to meet customer demands and to continue leading the way in ecommerce, Schoenberger relies heavily on its IT infrastructure, requiring agility, flexibility, and automation.

The Challenges: Complex Systems and Slow Performance Create Frustration

Today only a small part of the company's headquarters in Hohenschäftlarn contributes to the manufacturing side of the business. Instead, its focus is on supporting the company's ecommerce and administration teams. The company's IT services are currently supported by three onsite data centers, two of them fully redundant, providing the necessary support for failover. Florian Geisler, CTO at Schoenberger, commented: "As an online trader, we have to ship a lot of parcels—usually close to 10,000 each day from several warehouses in Germany and Poland. Additionally, we use our own manufacturing lines to produce more than 2,000 products each day. With both shipping and production relying heavily on our IT infrastructure, ensuring high availability is critical to all of our operations. Downtime, even just for a few minutes, would be a huge problem for us."

Next to production and shipping, the company runs four different online portals that are developed and managed by substantial in-house teams. These teams rely on many critical IT-services that need to be high performing, agile, and often automated. These services are provided by a modern, fully virtualized and redundant enterprise cloud infrastructure. Previously, Schoenberger's IT environment relied on synchronous mirroring provided by NetApp's hybrid storage platform.

"To put it simply, we were just not happy with the performance of our existing storage," explained Geisler. "The NetApp solution was extremely slow—booting a server would take twenty seconds or much more, and managing the process was a pain from start to finish."

In addition, the NetApp solution provided no clear visibility and when IT issues arose the team had to run extensive and time-consuming tests. As part of this process the team needed to move some workloads onto local SSDs, which would leave it vulnerable, as it was not fully redundant. Updates also caused issues for the team, as employees were not able to use SMB shares at the time. In order to avoid disrupting operations that relied on access to these SMB shares, updates had to be performed on weekends.

The company also wanted to implement a new ERP-system, which proved to be an impossible task, due to NetApp's poor performance. "When we tried implementing a new ERP system, due to the slow performance the entire system crashed and NetApp's latency skyrocketed to more than 140 milliseconds," commented Geisler.

Challenges

- Needed more performance for critical workloads
- Needed simple storage management and troubleshooting
- Needed non-disruptive updates

Solution

- Tintri Global Center
- Tintri VMstore T5060

Results

- Eliminate storage-focused maintenance
- Increased visibility, enabling faster troubleshooting across infrastructure
- New ERP systems now runs stable
- Provisioning of new servers takes only two seconds, down from twenty seconds with NetApp.
- Latencies down from 140 milliseconds with NetApp to only 0.6 to 1 milliseconds
- Savings on time for storage management

Tintri
Intelligent Infrastructure

The Solution: Tintri VMstore and Tintri Global Center

In need of a new solution, Schoenberger's IT team started to scan the market for a suitable new system that would offer the automation, agility, and performance the company required. After a successful PoC, the company decided to implement VMstore T5060, providing enhanced performance, faster response times, and low energy consumption.

The Results: Simplified Management and Faster Performance

The difference between standard infrastructure and Intelligent Infrastructuer became apparent from the start. "The first thing we noticed from the outset was how easy VMstore was to install. It took less than one hour for us to unpack, install, and start running the first workload on our VMstore solution. In that time, you can barely unpack and connect a NetApp storage solution," sums up Geisler. "The increased performance is also a huge advantage for us. With VMstore, it only takes around two seconds to boot up a new server, rather than the twenty seconds it took with NetApp. In addition to this, latencies have dropped from 140msec with NetApp to only 0.6 to 1msec with VMstore."

Another huge advantage for Schoenberger was the ease of management provided by the VMstore solution. The IT team at the company's headquarters consists of only three IT managers and none of them are storage experts. "VMstore makes our lives easier as it allows us to see everything that is happening on the Tintri Global Center dashboard. It also shows us where there could be problems, which means we can act on it very easily and quickly," explained Geisler. "We have saved a lot of time that was previously wasted on storage management. Now our workloads are automated and we have complete visibility."

"With the NetApp solution, we had to be complete storage experts, and this was a huge challenge for us. However, with VMstore, during the PoC we already had a case where they could demonstrate the level of support the company offers. We found both the IT support and solution were far better than anything we had tried previously," added Geisler. "We used a switch with outdated firmware to connect the VMstore solution. This created a problem in the system, but the support was able to find the issue with just a few clicks by logging in remotely. Our experience with NetApp was exactly the opposite. We had to create and submit many logs and often we would be chasing for a response. In contrast, the Tintri support team contacts us before we know that there could be a problem."

Currently, Schoenberger has only used 50% of the capacity provided by the VMstore solution. With plenty of room to grow, the company is planning on further expanding its virtualized footprint. Geisler concluded: "With NetApp, this was not previously possible as the solution struggled to support our growing virtualized workloads. Now with VMstore, we have the extra capacity we need to help our business expand."

Although a successful player in digital media and marketing, Schoenberger has not forgotten its roots. Even today, its original handicraft business of installing sun protection products in its local market and community is still an active part of the corporation. However, for the remaining 99% of its business, it is relying on VMstore to accomplish its mission requiring an agile, automated, high-performing IT environment.

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Florian Geisler, CTO, Schoenberger Group

Experience Different! For more information on how Tintri VMstore can turbo-charge your business success through a simple, Intelligent Infrastructure, visit tintri.com/vmstore.