Colacem

Italian cement manufacturer Colacem wished to centralize and standardize the management of its increasing and diversified international activities. Application upgrades—such as the introduction of support for additional foreign languages or new legal regulations—were complex and time-consuming, putting the company's ability to compete abroad at risk. Colacem decided to replace its highly customized resource management solution with SAP ERP, choosing SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server for System z for top availability and reliability.

Overview

Established in Italy in the early 1960s as a family-run business, Colacem has grown to become an enterprise group operating in the cement industry. Employing 2,500 people, Colacem manages production plants in a dozen countries around the world, including Canada, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.

Colacem's strong international outlook is aimed at taking advantage of better overseas growth prospects to expand the business.

Challenge

With production spread across such a diverse geographical area, Colacem needs to be able to easily and rapidly interact with production plants abroad to meet the unique challenges of each local market and ensure smooth service delivery. As Colacem expanded its global reach, the company found that a lack of unified data—available on-the-fly at all times—left it unable to effectively manage operations and truly take advantage of its international scale.

Massimo Vispi, Application and Mainframe Manager at Colacem, said, "The way we managed our whole group's activities was unbelievably customized and entirely in Italian. It took our IT team and consultants too much time and effort to implement essential changes, such as the addition of an industry-specific legal requirement or a foreign language, and we just couldn't afford to waste our time and money on this."

> "Running SAP ERP on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z has helped strengthen our international outlook and goals, as it puts us at the same high level of larger multi-national corporations in terms of technology and performance."

MASSIMO VISPI
Application and Mainframe Manager
Colacem

COLACEM

Colacem at a Glance:

Colacem is an Italian enterprise group operating in the cement industry. Employing 2,500 people, Colacem manages production plants and facilities in a dozen countries around the world.

■ **Industry and Location**
  Manufacturing, Italy

■ **Products and Services**
  SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z

■ **Results**
  + *Helps the company to respond more proactively to new international challenges.*
  + *Provides integrated, cost-effective and highly reliable support for core operations.*
  + *Streamlines and accelerates application updates.*

Looking for a management solution to centralize and standardize its international activities, Colacem decided to deploy SAP ERP on the IBM zEnterprise EC12 mainframe (zEC12).

"Our hardware environment has been IBM-based since 1987, and we are aware of the great synergy between IBM and SAP. We instantly saw that there were huge advantages to be gained by running a complete suite of SAP ERP applications on our recently implemented and super-resilient IBM zEnterprise EC12[zEC12]," said Massimo Vispi.

Colacem chose to implement SAP ERP—with applications for financials and controlling, sales and distribution, materials management, project system, production planning and human resources—SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse and SAP Business Workflow on the IBM zEC12, with IBM DB2 for z/OS as the chosen database software.

The company also needed the right operating system that could support reliable, available and scalable business operations.

Massimo Vispi said, "We wanted to run the database server on z/OS on the mainframe as this was a core internal competence. For the SAP application servers, we looked into the possibilities of running on distributed systems, and concluded that Linux on the mainframe would give us a better combination of cost-effectiveness, stability and scalability."

Solution

Understanding that the IBM mainframe could host both its existing z/OS environment and a Linux environment, Colacem decided to implement SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z.

"Choosing the ideal operating system has a huge impact on guaranteeing that the overall solution will work properly: that's why we chose SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z," said Massimo Vispi. "A key factor was the close relationship between IBM, SAP and SUSE, which translates into product optimization and excellent, integrated support."

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z combines high flexibility and reliability, while being very cost-effective and fully validated and certified by SAP. This gave Colacem great peace of mind, knowing that the new solution would be supported and maintained in a highly professional and reliable way.

Colacem's zEC12 has two standard engines (CPs) and three Integrated Facility for Linux (IFL) engines, which offer highly advantageous software pricing for workloads running on Linux. In total across Linux and z/OS, the company has eight logical partitions (LPARs) to keep workloads separate. For its SAP ERP landscape—including test/development, quality assurance and production environments—Colacem runs five separate instances of SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z. The company chose not to use z/VM to host virtualized Linux servers, instead running its Linux workloads directly on the LPARs.

Massimo Vispi said, "We chose to deploy IBM System z because having a single system with multiple partitions allows us to reach the highest security levels—the LPARs in the mainframes are EAL5+ certified. System z also provides us with a robust solution for disaster recovery, as we can currently restart our business critical environment within four hours at the IBM center in Milan.

With both SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z and IBM z/OS hosted on the same hardware, Colacem can make use of Hiper Sockets virtual networking on the mainframe to dramatically enhance the speed of interaction between the two.

Massimo Vispi said, "This configuration made it possible for us to get rid of traditional LAN or WAN networks, which means that typical latency times are basically close to zero. This translates into continuous application availability and service delivery."

Results

With SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z providing a robust, high-performance and low-maintenance platform for its SAP ERP landscape, Colacem can focus on adapting the core functionality to its changing international business needs.

Massimo Vispi said, "Running SAP ERP on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z has helped strengthen our international outlook and goals, as it puts us at the same high level of larger multi-national corporations in terms of technology and performance."

Andrea Coccia, IT Director at Colacem, said, "Thanks to the implementation of this joint SUSE-IBM-SAP solution, and the integrated support offered by IBM, we feel like we are in safe hands. We know that whatever changes, upgrades or additions we need to implement to keep on top of our business abroad, we can do it—and we can do it quickly, reliably and with impressive scalability."

Simplified licensing costs offered by the SUSE solution are another benefit that Colacem is enjoying. Andrea Coccia said, "With only one license needed to cover all of the virtual servers we run, we can hugely decrease software licensing and support costs, and re-invest the money saved."

He concluded, "With SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for System z, we are confident that our crucial business operations are supported in a highly trusted, available and scalable way, at all times and across all of our production plants in Italy and abroad. The great synergy between SUSE, IBM and SAP proved to be a decisive factor in delivering a complete, integrated and extremely reliable solution, perfectly tailored to our requests."

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ANDREA COCCIA
IT Director
Colacem

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1 800 796 3700 U.S./Canada
1 801 861 4500 Worldwide

SUSE
Maxfeldstrasse 5
90409 Nuremberg
Germany

SUSE