



Success Story

Server

Apollo-Optik

To maintain its competitive advantage, Apollo-Optik needed to implement a retail IT solution, ready to cope with future challenges. Streamlining its development and deployment processes, Apollo-Optik joined forces with SUSE Pre-Sales and SUSE partner B1 Systems to design and implement a fully integrated system based on SUSE® Linux Enterprise Point of Service, SUSE Manager and the Open Build Service solution. Today, new releases can be rolled out faster and more flexibly, improving the customer experience.



Overview

Apollo-Optik, a leading optical retailer headquartered in Schwabach in Germany, operates 800 branches and franchise stores across Germany. Thanks to its strong local presence, customers can always find an Apollo-Optik store nearby.

Apollo-Optik is part of the international GrandVision group that has stores in more than 40 countries throughout Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia and is one of the largest optical retailers in the world.

Challenge

To maintain its strong position, Apollo-Optik needed a retail IT solution, ready to cope with future challenges. At a time when sales channels are converging, driving increasing demand for integrated

customer service across online platforms and local stores, the company wanted to accelerate and simplify deployment processes to push innovative services out to customers more rapidly.

Continuous expansion from 250 to 800 stores had left Apollo-Optik with an IT solution that was unable to keep pace with business growth. This custom-built solution with error-prone deployment and distribution procedures was difficult to manage and offered limited control.

With 800 distributed and independent servers, the company suffered from complex dependency management, because core business applications needed to support a broad range of technologies. Erich Ehbauer, CIO at Apollo-Optik says, "The heterogeneous server landscape gave our developers a very hard time. Our outdated systems slowed down time-to-market for new features, and we risked falling behind the competition."

Solution

To get its IT services up to speed, Apollo-Optik engaged with SUSE Pre-Sales, SUSE Premium Partner B1 Systems and other consulting and implementation partners to design and implement a fully integrated release management and deployment solution based on SUSE Linux Enterprise Point of Service software in combination with SUSE Manager and the Open Build Server solution.

"The new SUSE environment implemented by B1 Systems effectively decouples our software release cycles from the hardware refresh lifecycle, giving us much greater flexibility and the ability to deliver new functionality at the point-of-sale much more quickly."

ERICH EHBAUER
CIO
Apollo-Optik

Apollo-Optik at a Glance:

Apollo-Optik is a leading optical retailer with approximately 800 branches and franchise stores in Germany. The company is part of the GrandVision group that operates in 40 countries throughout Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia.

■ Industry and Location

Schwabach, Germany

■ Products and Services

SUSE Linux Enterprise Point of Service
SUSE Linux Enterprise Server
SUSE Manager
Open Build Service

■ Results

- + Automated server deployment
- + Simplified and centralized systems, configuration and software management
- + Accelerated software development and testing
- + Enables seamless multi-channel sales processes

“We selected SUSE because we could integrate SUSE Manager with existing processes much more easily than other management systems, thanks to its powerful programming interface. The integrated Xen hypervisor saves a huge amount in license fees.”

STEFAN THEMA

*Teamlead Open Infrastructure Conceptions
Apollo-Optik*

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Stefan Thema, Teamlead Open Infrastructure Conceptions at Apollo-Optik, said, “We selected SUSE because we could integrate SUSE Manager with existing processes much more easily than other management systems, thanks to its powerful programming interface. The integrated Xen hypervisor saves a huge amount in license fees and was ideal for rolling out a consistent virtualization solution to our branches.”

B1 Systems supported Apollo-Optik throughout and after the project. The partner enabled a smooth and automated workflow by developing a customized application integration platform based on B1-Glue API to connect SUSE Manager to the company’s Microsoft Dynamics NAV ERP system, which provides master data and configuration details for the local store servers.

B1 Systems also connected the source control system used by application developers at Apollo-Optik to the Open Build Service to ensure reliable packaging of new releases. To provide an automated and uninterrupted process flow, B1 Systems integrated the Open Build Service with SUSE Manager, making new releases immediately available for testing.

Results

Apollo-Optik can now support its large server landscape much more efficiently, while standardized packaging, deployment and installation processes have improved overall reliability. A more transparent view of both the IT landscape and software management processes has increased operational security and improved governance.

Stefan Thema said, “In the past, staff needed to monitor installation of new branch servers and make sure that everything was working. Today, with just two clicks, the solution automatically creates tailored installation instructions for a new server including all required application configurations. As soon as the box is plugged into the network, all of the required software is installed by SUSE AutoYaST, complete with virtualization, without any user interaction, finished in 45 minutes per install. This automation helps reduce errors and ensures standardized installations, speeding up the process significantly.”

Thanks to the integrated packaging of test releases into this continuous provisioning and maintenance solution, software developers can easily try out new features. Developers can start the packaging process directly by committing certain flags to the version control system. In a matter of seconds, the code gets packaged and the release can easily be installed for software testing. And when a new release gets approved, it is instantly available for automated deployment.

Erich Ehbauer said, “The SUSE environment implemented by B1 Systems effectively decouples software release cycles from hardware refresh lifecycles, giving us greater flexibility to deliver new functionality at the point-of-sale much more quickly. Today, we can deploy software updates more rapidly, keeping pace with a fast-moving business environment, and we have streamlined application development by reducing legacy dependencies. Ultimately, the ability to integrate different sales channels much more closely will improve the customer experience and provide a competitive edge.”



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