Delta Lloyd

To support several critical applications, Delta Lloyd needed to expand its Linux environment. To reduce management costs, the IT team decided to standardize on a single Linux distribution, and chose SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server.

Overview
The Delta Lloyd group is one of the leading insurance and financial services organizations in the Netherlands, operating under three brands: Delta Lloyd, OHRA and ABN AMRO Insurance. The company is primarily active in the Netherlands and Belgium, with a staff of 6,100 permanent employees and total assets under management of more than €70 billion.

Challenge
To increase the range and quality of services available to its customers, Delta Lloyd’s IT team realized that it needed to enhance two of its most important IT systems.

First, the team wanted to upgrade to the latest version of IBM WebSphere Application Server, which would support the creation of sophisticated ‘building blocks’ that simplify the creation of new web services and applications.

Second, one of the company’s main applications had previously been ported onto the IBM AIX platform, but the application vendor no longer wanted to support this operating system. The preferred platform for the application was Linux, so Delta Lloyd wanted to move the system into a Linux environment.

“We decided to create a number of new Linux environments to support both of these environments,” said Berrie Vlietstra, Datacenter Manager at Delta Lloyd. “As a result, Linux would become a much more important part of our IT landscape than ever before. To keep management and support costs to a minimum, we decided to standardize on a single Linux distribution across the whole organization.”

Solution
The Delta Lloyd IT team decided to standardize on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server.

“We had previously used SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for our IBM Tivoli Access Manager environment,” said Raoul Pietersen, Linux Engineer at Delta Lloyd. “We also had good experience with the support provided by SUSE and the SUSE Linux community.”

The team installed SUSE Linux Enterprise Server on more than 75 dedicated Intel processor-based servers to run the production environments for WebSphere and other vendors’ applications. Delta Lloyd also

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BERRIE VLIETSTRA
Datacenter Manager
Delta Lloyd

Success Story
Insurance

Delta Lloyd at a glance:
Leading Dutch insurance company

- Industry and Location
Insurance, The Netherlands

- Products and Services
SUSE Linux Enterprise Server

- Results
  + Simplified Linux management by standardizing on a single distribution
  + Reduced software licensing and support costs by porting a major application from IBM AIX to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server
  + Reduced infrastructure costs by moving from proprietary hardware to commodity x86 processor-based servers
“It is good to have the option of running SUSE Linux Enterprise Server with VMware for non-production systems. This gives us a lot of flexibility and agility when we start a new project and need to begin development as quickly as possible.”

RAOUL PIETERSEN
Linux Engineer
Delta Lloyd

utilizes SUSE Linux Enterprise Server as a ‘perfect guest’ operating system in virtualized systems. For test and development environments, the team uses VMware vSphere to create virtual Linux servers which can be created rapidly and decommissioned quickly, according to the needs of the business.

"Using dedicated servers is best in terms of performance and simplicity, but it is also good to have the option of running SUSE Linux Enterprise Server with VMware for non-production systems," said Pietersen. "This gives us a lot of flexibility and agility when we start a new project and need to begin development as quickly as possible."

The growth of the SUSE Linux Enterprise Server landscape at Delta Lloyd has also created some interesting possibilities for future projects.

"At the moment we have a number of databases that are running on proprietary operating systems, and it would certainly reduce our software licensing costs if we could port them to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server instead," comments Vlietstra. "The database vendor is trying to persuade us to do a proof-of-concept, and the results could be very interesting."

Results
The implementation of SUSE Linux Enterprise Server to support WebSphere and the third-party application has been a complete success, and neither system has encountered any significant problems since the go-live. In fact, since the vendor of the third-party application recommends SUSE Linux Enterprise Server as its preferred operating system, Delta Lloyd expects it to be even more reliable than the previous platform.

"In the world of IT, standardizing on one platform is almost always advantageous," said Vlietstra. "In this case, the choice of SUSE Linux Enterprise Server ensures that a single team with a common skill-set can manage our Linux applications with minimum effort and expense."

Running the two applications on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server is a more cost-effective option than using AIX because the software licensing and maintenance costs are significantly lower. Moreover, the company has been able to move away from expensive proprietary hardware platforms and onto lower-cost x86 processor-based servers.

Linux also gives the company access to a wider range of support options than are usually available for proprietary operating systems.

"With Linux, as well as getting support direct from the vendor, you can also go to the community," said Vlietstra. "This gives us another way to find solutions to Linux-related problems and find out about best practices in other organizations."