

Customer Success Story

Restructuring of IT without downtime
at Rational Einbauküchen GmbH



K & P COMPUTER®

Service- und Vertriebs-GmbH

K&P Computer Upgrades IT and Backup Systems

The kitchen expert Rational has been successful player on the market for more than 45 years and is represented today in over 50 countries. Rich in tradition, the company has always set high standards for engineering, quality and functionality. It also applies these standards to its own infrastructure. Given this strong commitment to quality, Rational decided in early 2013 to modernize its existing infrastructure and set up an additional datacenter in a separate space.



The challenge

Rational's main concern was to improve the security of the existing production system. Furthermore, company restructuring in recent years had created something of a backlog, which would be addressed by modernizing the entire IT infrastructure. The goal was to noticeably improve performance by implementing new hardware and software. First and foremost, the challenge was to replace the existing IBM Power 5 Servers with Power 7+ Servers, to integrate new

storage hardware, to migrate data, and to set up the new backup datacenter and bring it online. All this without disrupting the daily workflow.

The solution

The first step taken by K&P was to set up the new backup datacenter in a separate space and to migrate the data. Next, the old Power 5 machines were removed from the already existing datacenter and the second new IBM server was installed. The data from the backup server was then transferred to the new servers. The customer benefited primarily from the fact that K&P did all of the work on weekends and completed it so successfully that Rational's employees had no idea that a migration had even taken place. After the upgrade, IT processes continued without problems, or ran even better thanks to performance improvements.

Prior to the upgrade, Rational Einbauküchen GmbH had already been a customer of K&P Computer for over ten years. K&P had long been entrusted with maintaining and monitoring the IBM-AIX server and other hardware. KPCrac®, a high availability solution developed by K&P, had already been implemented at Rational. Now it had to be adapted to the new conditions. For this purpose, K&P installed a so-called "stretched" cluster. This modification allows data to be replicated in the storage system using native mirroring functionality. This protects all of Rational's applications from both local incidents and external influences such as fire and water damage. Whereas in normal cases the workload is divided between two servers to improve performance, in the event of a disaster the second system takes over the entire workload. Should one of the systems break down, a brief, manual procedure is all it takes to activate the failover, thus enabling one server to assume complete control.

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Because all of the applications and their transaction data are stored on shared SAN systems, the backup function is able to restore current data from shortly before the breakdown. "One major advantage of KPCrac® is that it's a very lean and stable system, and quite easy to manage," says Franz-Josef Bultmann of K&P's in-house solution. Furthermore, in the course of everyday operations, either one of the servers can take over all services for testing or maintenance purposes, so that the employees' work is not interrupted.

Once the new IT landscape had been installed, the employees were trained to use the new system and familiarized themselves with it.

Despite the fact that K&P Computer was restricted to working at Rational's headquarters on the weekends, once the hardware had been delivered it only took a few weeks to finalize the project, including handover of the datacenter.

The Competitive Advantage

Our extensive expertise in consulting on both the expansion and installation of IT infrastructure, combined with in-house solutions such as the KPCrac® high availability solution, enable us to give our clients serious competitive advantages. This not only means a problem-free implementation phase without downtime, but also cost-efficient operation in an optimized IT landscape in the years to come.

"In the many years we've worked together, K&P Computer has shown us that they can be relied upon and that their employees are truly experts in their field."

Franz-Josef Bultmann, Manager of Back Office, IT and Organization at Rational

Since 1985, K&P Computer has offered its customers consulting, maintenance and support services for IT systems. By pursuing a consistent business strategy, the company has steadily built up its market position, with a rising annual growth rate that is well above average.

As an experienced service provider, especially in connection with products by IBM, Hewlett-Packard, Fujitsu Technology Solutions, Dell, NetApp and Cisco Systems, we currently service around 2,600 customers with more than 43,000 systems and peripheral units in Germany, Austria and neighboring EU countries.

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