Streamlining customer service with automated private cloud

Hosting provider OEDIV creates super-flexible SAP S/4HANA service with IBM Power10

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Overview

For IT service provider OEDIV, it was essential to offer its customers new ways to run faster, smarter and more-sustainable operations to help them innovate and respond to a volatile marketplace. At the same time, OEDIV's customers seek enterprise-grade reliability, security and performance, with the capacity, ease and rapid setup of public cloud services.

Changing customer demands

In the hyper-connected business world, nothing stays static for long. The constant search for new opportunities and efficiencies leads to innovation and creativity, from automation to AI.

To help maintain laser focus on core excellence, many companies partner with specialists to operate, maintain and develop their business applications and IT infrastructure. Hosting provider OEDIV (Oetker Daten- und Informationsverarbeitung) was itself originally the internal IT service division of the international Dr. Oetker Group, famous around the world for bakers' products and foods.

OEDIV helps companies to exploit the benefits of SAP solutions, providing technical and business support combined with in-depth solution knowledge. For more than 25 years, OEDIV has relied on IBM® Power® systems to help provide scalability, security and reliability for hundreds of customers, using hosted, private cloud, multicloud and hybrid cloud architectures. Particularly for the small- and medium-size business sector, OEDIV's service enables access to powerful SAP applications running on IBM Power that might otherwise be out of reach, and for larger customers OEDIV offers strategic advice and insight based on its wide-ranging industry experience.

Dominik Münch, Team Manager - Power & Operating System Center at OEDIV, explains: "There is no single cloud strategy that fits every company. Choosing the solution that is the most effective depends on the customer's processes and management requirements. OEDIV's broad portfolio offers diverse cloud solutions to cater for a very wide range of requirements. As a result, OEDIV itself seeks the most-flexible, high-performance and highly capable IT infrastructure to support our customers' ambitions."

25%

cost savings for SAP S/4HANA on IBM Power

200 hours

time saved each month achieved through automation of key tasks on IBM Power

"Using the latest Power10 processors and IBM Power Private Cloud with Shared Utility Capacity, we achieved up to 25% cost savings for SAP HANA on IBM Power. With IBM PowerVC and Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform, we can provision systems more efficiently and 20%–30% faster."

Dominik Münch
Team Manager - Power & Operating System Center
OEDIV

Taking advantage of automation

With the release of the IBM Power10 family of servers, OEDIV reviewed the opportunity to optimize and streamline its operations. In the context of foundation criteria, including security and stability, the team looked at ways to enhance availability, capacity, performance and sustainability. Ultimately, OEDIV is focused on serving customers' desires for flexibility, economy and capability, and highlighted IBM Power10 as the ideal platform to support these ambitions.

Multiple Power10 features combine to create a compelling proposition for OEDIV, with virtualization and automation offering critical business advantages. By combining advanced technologies, OEDIV is able to streamline and optimize its operations, increase sustainability—exceptionally important in the energy-hungry compute-intensive world—and deliver enhanced customer service.

With these layered objectives in mind, OEDIV was attracted by specific features of the Power10 architecture, and chose four new IBM Power E1080 servers as the next phase in its infrastructure journey.

Virtualization for improved efficiency

Several interlocking capabilities of IBM Power10 enable OEDIV to significantly improve its IT efficiency. Virtualization ensures processor and memory capacity can be shared and optimized. "IBM Power10 offers greatly improved resource allocation capabilities and cost savings while ensuring we gain the maximum possible benefits for key issues such as availability and performance," Münch reports.

OEDIV uses IBM Power Private Cloud with Shared Utility Capacity technology (formerly known as Power Enterprise Pools 2.0), which creates a shared pool of compute and memory resources. From the single resource, OEDIV allocates capacity tailored to each SAP S/4HANA instance in the most cost-efficient manner. The solution ensures that OEDIV avoids over-investing in capacity that might be unused, while each customer is provided with the optimal performance for its specific requirements.

Essential high availability

With IBM Power Private Cloud with Shared Utility Capacity, processor and memory usage is tracked based on average usage by the minute. If a hardware server requires maintenance or experiences technical issues, then the workload can be moved seamlessly to other remaining systems. While more resources will be used on those servers, the total capacity and payment will stay the same.

OEDIV uses the IBM PowerVC solution to orchestrate deployments, manage the storage area network, LPARs and more, centrally. In addition, OEDIV deploys IBM Cloud® Management Console technology for capacity planning, which provides real-time insight and reporting that helps predict likely requirements.

To manage storage, OEDIV uses 20 IBM Storage Virtualize nodes, capable of integrating with systems from multiple vendors, to help maximize availability and optimize utilization of space in available arrays. For its high-performance SAP S/4HANA environment on IBM Power, OEDIV relies on eight IBM Storage FlashSystem® storage solutions.

Speed of service

To create operational flexibility, OEDIV uses IBM PowerVM® software to create multiple independent virtual machines (VMs), also known as LPARs, on each server. According to customer preference and type of application, the company offers multiple operating systems, including Red Hat® Enterprise Linux® (link resides outside of ibm.com), SUSE Linux Enterprise Server (link resides outside of ibm.com), IBM AIX®, and IBM i. OEDIV runs more than 1,500 LPARs across its landscape of Power9® and Power10 servers, with more than 1 PB of available memory and 6,500 processor cores.

"The ability to deploy different operating systems and the multicloud configurations enables OEDIV to offer more choice even as we adopt standardized, scalable solutions," explains Münch. "Standardization and automation are important factors, as our customers expect provisioning times, even for large-scale, complex SAP S/4HANA solutions, to be similar to times experienced in public clouds."

Naturally, when running premium services, outages for technology upgrades are not acceptable. With a constant flow of requests from customers to create, delete, move and resize their SAP solutions, OEDIV relies on IBM virtualization configuration management, IBM PowerVC, to manage the workflow and on IBM Power Live Partition Mobility (LPM) to move workload online as necessary.

"We typically manage more than 1,500 Live Partition Mobility operations each month, an extreme example of the flexibility that the IBM Power platform provides," says Münch. "This is an enormous volume. IBM Live Partition Mobility enables us to complete all kinds of maintenance tasks even while we deliver continuous service to customers."

Automation and standardization

OEDIV handles many hundreds of requests from customers each month for additional cores to be allocated to their SAP systems. Very high customer service levels become possible with Power10, especially when combined with solutions such as Red Hat Ansible® Automation Platform and IBM PowerVC.

"The ease of management and unmatched flexibility combined with automation on the IBM Power platform has typically cut 30 minutes from many standard maintenance tasks, saving perhaps 200 hours each month," comments Münch. "Where previously tasks might require level-three support technicians, IBM PowerVC provides an intuitive abstraction layer that enables staff to complete the work safely, quickly and efficiently."

Performance improvements

Naturally, the move to the next-generation IBM Power10 platform, which offers expanded processor and memory capacity, also delivers valuable processing improvements.

“On average we see up to 15% performance boost with Power10, which in turn reduces costs for customers thanks to improved CPU performance and lower core allocations for their systems,” says Münch. “The increased Power10 processing power means we can deliver greater compute capacity within the same footprint, with up to 240 cores per server, and with more memory, leading to a 10% improvement in memory cost efficiency.”

He continues: “Furthermore, by using the latest Power10 processors and IBM Power Private Cloud with Shared Utility Capacity, we achieved up to 25% cost savings for SAP HANA on IBM Power. And in the LPARs running IBM AIX we see cost savings of 16.6%. And with IBM PowerVC and Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform, we can provision systems more efficiently and 20%–30% faster, more-efficient system provisioning.”

Sustainable computing

OEDIV also keeps a close watch on its environmental objectives, looking at electrical consumption, cooling and recycling of equipment among many measures. In addition, with a very large infrastructure footprint, asset lifetime and lifecycle can impact total sustainability metrics. The IBM Power servers are built using recycled materials where possible, and with end-of-life recycling—up to 99.2%—in mind, too.

“When compared to x86 servers, we find that the IBM Power servers last longer by about 30% without failures or issues,” says Münch. “Our installed base of IBM Power servers offers greater scalability, and our systems operate for a greater time span before we need to renew.”

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Dominik Münch
Team Manager - Power & Operating System Center
OEDIV

Ready for the AI explosion

OEDIV continues to modernize its infrastructure as part of its mission to make running SAP solutions as easy and cost-effective as possible. As the company streamlines processes and finds new efficiencies, OEDIV is able to bring SAP S/4HANA within reach of almost any business, particularly smaller organizations.

“Being able to offer SAP S/4HANA on IBM Power as a private cloud service is a great achievement, and offers availability, performance and stability for all customers,” says Münch. “Using IBM Power as our critical infrastructure reduces our security risks, too, as it is a hard target for hackers, while offering improved defense for our customers.”

Service reliability

In the same way that OEDIV forms close working relationships with its customers, the company relies on IBM Technology Lifecycle Services to support its SAP HANA on IBM Power landscape.

“OEDIV enjoys great proactive collaboration, from both sides. IBM tells us about important changes or updates, and we also talk to them about what we’re planning or working on,” says Münch. “This close relationship and collaboration between OEDIV and IBM delivers very effective operations. The big advantage for us is that IBM technicians already know our environment, our technical requirements, and our business needs. IBM assists OEDIV across all components, with a central contact for IBM Power, storage virtualization, storage, networking, Red Hat Linux, SUSE Linux and SAP applications. IBM simplifies the support for us and if necessary discusses issues in the background with the other vendors and manufacturers involved. Without ‘finger-pointing,’ if an issue arises we work as a team to get it sorted.”

Future of automation and AI

To streamline security and compliance, OEDIV is currently evaluating IBM PowerSC. The company expects to improve support for compliance audits with the new solutions to ensure the highest service quality and data protection levels.

OEDIV is also considering the optimization possibilities offered by IBM Instana®, the fully automated real-time observability platform, designed to provide context-based performance data to help prevent and remediate issues. Similarly, OEDIV is reviewing the advantages of IBM Turbonomic®, the application management program that helps automate optimization actions, such as configuring the most-efficient compute, storage and network resources.

Looking further ahead, the built-in AI processing capability available in IBM Power10 will offer significant advantages to OEDIV and its customers. Processing both AI and transaction data within the same system removes the need to move data across networks, which increases security—an essential consideration for core business processes—as well as providing ready-and-waiting AI capacity. As more AI features become embedded in SAP applications, the IBM Power10 platform positions OEDIV to help its customers take advantage of this exponentially exploding technology.

Münch concludes: “IBM Power10 provides a very clear, strategic roadmap for OEDIV, enabling us to optimize, automate and streamline our infrastructure, helping us to offer outstanding SAP S/4HANA services to our customers. IBM Power10 gives OEDIV an outstanding combination of cost-efficiency, ease of management, scalability and future AI capabilities for SAP S/4HANA. As part of our hybrid cloud and multi cloud strategy, we’re also looking at the innovative cloud offering IBM Power Virtual Server to design even more flexible, geo-redundant and cost-effective disaster recovery deployments in the future.”

About OEDIV

OEDIV (Oetker Daten- und Informationsverarbeitung), a certified SAP hosting partner and SUSE partner, is a premium provider of infrastructure solutions and managed services for Germany's business sector. The company is part of the Oetker Group, one of the largest family-owned businesses in Europe, which employs more than 29,000 people and generates annual revenues of almost EUR 6.5 billion. The group's brands include the world-famous Dr. Oetker range of baking products.

Solution components

IBM® AIX®

IBM Cloud® Management Console

IBM i

IBM Power® E1080

IBM Power E980

IBM Power Private Cloud with Shared Utility Capacity

IBM Power10

IBM PowerSC

IBM PowerVC

IBM PowerVM

IBM Storage FlashSystem® 9150

IBM Storage FlashSystem 9250

IBM Storage Virtualize

IBM Technology Expert Labs

IBM Technology Lifecycle Services

IBM Total Solution Support for SAP HANA

Red Hat® Ansible Automation Platform

Red Hat® Enterprise Linux

SAP Business Warehouse

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