

In-house SAP systems as an alternative to outsourcing

CeramTec deploys FlexFrame for SAP® for dynamic performance



» For anyone who wants to plan his SAP system for the next 3 to 4 years, FlexFrame for SAP is the best solution. «

Dirk Wiechmann, Manager Information Systems Service Center, CeramTec AG

→ The challenge

Flexible support for business processes – through the implementation of a flexible SAP environment that permits quick integration of corporate acquisitions and the use of server and storage resources on demand

More economical SAP operation – lower overall costs and ensure economical expansion

IT compliance for the entire SAP environment – system availability, data security and data protection in compliance with international regulatory requirements

→ The solution

The SAP systems of CeramTec AG, a subsidiary of Rockwood that is traded on the New York Stock Exchange, are absolutely business-critical since production is never interrupted. International regulatory requirements now call for data protection and seamless documentation. In addition, the company's business requires extremely agile IT functionality, to integrate new acquisitions with minimum delay, for example. In order to be able to continue to meet all of these requirements in the future, this supplier of high-performance ceramic products decided to reassume operation of its own SAP systems with **FlexFrame for SAP**. CeramTec now uses FlexFrame for SAP in a catastrophe-resistant configuration for 600 users. As a result, the company benefits from fourfold improvement in performance with its new Dynamic IT solution, operates significantly more SAP systems than in the past at only half the cost, and can economically scale or expand IT capacity as a function of changes in business needs.



CeramTec AG, an internationally leading provider of high-performance ceramics, specializes in the development and production of innovative products made of ceramic materials. With more than 3,000 employees worldwide, CeramTec is active in various industries – medical technology, electronics, automotive, equipment and machinery – and generated 2007 revenues in the amount of €330 million. More at: www.ceramtec.com

→ Solution components

- FlexFrame for SAP Version 3.2
- Hardware: PRIMERGY BX630 Blade servers with 80 processors, 2 PRIMERGY RX300 S2 rack servers as control nodes, NetApp FAS3020 MetroCluster with a gross capacity of 30 terabytes
- Backup software: Fujitsu Siemens Computers NetWorker
- Operating system: Novell SUSE Linux Enterprise Server
- Database: Oracle
- SAP modules: BW, HR, PLM, SRM, Compliance Calibrator

→ Customer benefits

- Legally compliant, failsafe SAP operation
- Fast response to new business requirements
- 50 % reduction in costs accompanied by considerable improvement in performance
- Significant in productivity
- Flexible use of resources
- Simple, economical scalability

→ The project

Up until just recently, CeramTec was outsourcing its SAP systems. However, that arrangement did not offer the versatility required by the business of this specialist in high-performance ceramics. And that explains why Dirk Wiechmann and his team started to look into FlexFrame for SAP. The combination of virtualization and availability of SAP as middleware in a complete infrastructure solution, flexible use of resources, transparent administration and integrated high availability proved so convincing that CeramTec adopted the Dynamic IT solution, at first for SAP Business Warehouse in an initial phase. This initial experience was thoroughly positive. As a result, CeramTec decision-makers then decided to reinstall all SAP systems in house again when their SAP outsourcing agreement ran out. The previous solution under Solaris™ was replaced by FlexFrame for SAP with PRIMERGY industry-standard blade servers and Linux. The overall solution, which features a NetApp FAS3020 MetroCluster, is distributed over two data center locations to ensure catastrophe-resistant operation. In addition, NetWorker from Fujitsu Siemens Computers is used for backup to tape in a separate fire zone.

→ A record of success

Dirk Wiechmann is thoroughly satisfied with the solution: "With FlexFrame for SAP, we can operate our SAP systems significantly more economically, more flexibly and in compliance with our high standards. For example, we can't tolerate a production outage; the integrated high availability of FlexFrame for SAP and the catastrophe-resistant design of the system give us the security and reliability we need." The SolutionContract for FlexFrame also provides additional security through proactive monitoring: "We even had a technician show up at the door before we were aware that we had a potential problem," says Dirk Wiechmann. He then added: "At first, we weren't sure whether industry-standard servers would meet our requirements. However, the performance completely convinced us; it improved by a factor of four." Wiechmann also praised the gain in agility his company experienced: "We need a system that makes us very flexible. The normal approach would be to start out by sizing the configuration and then plan in continuous annual growth. The problem is that planning doesn't always help – in the case of an acquisition, for example. But that's not the case with FlexFrame for SAP. The solution can be simply expanded, and the components required for any change in sizing are also economical. In addition, we benefit from very flexible use of resources. Last year, for example, we used the infrastructure solution to migrate our Czech subsidiary to SAP and plans exist to upgrade to SAP ERP 6.0 in the near future." Advantages like this obviously pay off when it comes to the bottom line, says Dirk Wiechmann: "The cost of our SAP operations has been halved even though we're now using many more systems. And as far as the price-performance ratio of FlexFrame for SAP is concerned, there's nothing better on the market right now."

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