



# Futureproofing Montana's data centre

Fashion retailer implements an integrated solution from HPE

## Objective

Creating a futureproof IT infrastructure to provide 24/7 access to business-critical systems

## Approach

Compared a variety of concepts from different IT suppliers. Decision made to install an integrated solution from HPE comprising a storage system, a tape library and switches

## IT Matters

- Futureproof, scalable IT infrastructure
- Faster backups with LTO-6 tapes
- Simpler backup process as there is no longer a virtual library
- Integrated HPE solution makes the entire IT environment easier to manage

## Business Matters

- The HPE 3PAR StoreServ system's four nodes ensure high availability of all business-critical applications and databases
- Excellent planning by Concat ensured a smooth migration to the new environment with just 12 hours downtime



Montana has completely modernised the IT infrastructure in its data centre: the Betty Barclay Group's service company now uses an integrated solution from HPE to ensure that its various departments have access to business-critical applications and data around the clock, and will continue to do so in the future.

## Challenge

### 24/7 availability for business-critical applications

Montana is the Betty Barclay Group's internal service company. The Group currently employs over 1,000 people, some 500 of whom work at its headquarters in Nußloch, Germany. It includes the brands Betty Barclay, Vera Mont, Gil Bret, Saint Jaques and Cartoon, which are sold in over 60 countries around the world.

Due to the Group's strong growth over recent years, the demands on its IT infrastructure have risen rapidly. Its data volumes have increased significantly, in no small part due to the accounting department's introduction of the SAP Finance (FI) and Controlling (CO) modules.

“The single-manufacturer strategy really made sense for us – if we have any problems, we have a single contact at Hewlett Packard Enterprise. The testing period showed us that the performance of the new solution would be sufficient for us and that it would be very easy to manage. Other solutions we investigated proved to be much more complex and time-consuming.”

– Karl-Robert Friedrich, IT/ORG manager, Montana

A total of 15 different databases – all of them Microsoft® SQL databases – are stored on the central IT system in Nußloch. These databases are used for a variety of different programs, such as the Product Data Management (PDM) system by Koppermann Computersysteme. Montana also uses an ERP system designed specifically for the fashion industry – INTEX Fashion ERP – and the Hiltes Software ERP system to manage the Group’s retail activities in Europe. All of its shops are connected to the system via their POS solutions.

In addition, the company operates a number of other systems to manage areas such as customs duties, mobile order entries, human resources planning, wages and salaries. The central SAN (storage area network) system currently has a capacity of 123 TB.

As well as the ever-increasing data volumes, demands on system availability are also increasing. “In principle, our systems have to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year,” explains Karl-Robert Friedrich, IT/ORG manager at Montana.

“This is because we work with partners in China who need access to both our PDM system and INTEX Fashion ERP system during their working hours. Our logistics partner here in Germany also works in shifts around the clock. And we have a high volume of data to process overnight – sometimes in batch jobs.”

In the past, Montana used an HPE EVA storage system for its complex IT environment. Data was backed up to an HPE tape library with LTO-4 tapes using HPE Data Protector software. However, this environment was beginning to show its age. Support for it had expired, the capacity was at its limits, and the company was beginning to experience availability and performance bottlenecks.

“The entire environment was simply no longer sufficient to meet our requirements, we had to modernise it in order to ensure that the company could continue to grow,” says Friedrich.



Together with its long-term IT service provider Concat, Montana began determining its requirements for its new data centre infrastructure in terms of performance, scalability for future expansion and ease of management. "Our IT systems are becoming more and more complex, so the new IT infrastructure had to be easy for our administrators to manage," explains Friedrich.

## **Solution**

### **Complete solution from a single provider**

Its catalogue of requirements finalised, Montana began searching for a new solution. Despite the positive experiences it had had with its previous complete Hewlett Packard Enterprise environment, the company was still open to new providers. "But in the end, Concat and HPE was the option that really stood out," remembers the IT/ORG manager. "Firstly, the single-manufacturer strategy made sense for us – if we have any problems, we have a single contact at HPE. Plus the price-performance ratio was very good. We also knew that both the performance of the new solution would be sufficient for us and that it would be very easy to manage as Concat provided us with a test version of the HPE 3PAR StoreServ storage system to trial for three weeks. Other solutions we investigated proved to be much more complex and time-consuming."

The company eventually settled on an HPE 3PAR StoreServ 7400c system with four nodes. The benefit of this is that if one node fails, the others continue to run without any loss of data. It also installed an HPE StoreEver MSL6480 Tape Library with six LTO-6 drives and 80 cartridge slots and replaced its switches as part of the project. In place of the old Fibre Channel switches with a transfer rate of 4 GB/s, the company now has two HPE StoreFabric SN6500B switches running at 16 GB/s. So the network infrastructure is well-prepared to handle future growth.

Before they could actually get the new infrastructure up and running, however, Montana's IT team had to work closely with Concat to get everything prepared. The company wanted to ensure that the systems would only be down for a maximum of 12 hours over a weekend so that the business could continue running as normal.

"The experts at Concat provided excellent support throughout every phase of the project, actively tackling our problems and requests. They also kept precisely to the schedule we devised so that downtime was kept to a minimum. It took just 12 hours to transfer all of the data over, and we've been using the new HPE 3PAR StoreServ system ever since. It went really smoothly," praises Friedrich.

## Case study

Montana GmbH  
& Co. KG

## Industry

Fashion, retail

## Customer at a glance

### Application

SAP Finance (FI) and Controlling (CO)

Koppermann TEX-DEFINE

INTEX Fashion ERP

HILTES 4000 Retail

### Hardware

- 1 x HPE 3PAR StoreServ 7400c with four nodes
- 1 x HPE StoreEver MSL6480 Tape Library with 80 cartridge slots and six LTO-6 drives
- 2 x HPE StoreFabric SN6500B 16 GB switches

### Software

- HPE 3PAR Dynamic Optimization Software Suite
- HPE 3PAR Reporting Suite

### HPE services

- Five years of HPE Proactive Care 24x7x4

### About Concat:

Concat AG ([www.concat.de](http://www.concat.de)) has been offering tailored IT infrastructures with optional support and operational services and a 24/7 helpdesk since 1990. The company also offers private cloud enterprise solutions and streamlined, fully managed hybrid and public cloud services. Its acquisition of Synergy Systems expanded its portfolio to include data centre and hosting services. Concat AG is based in Bensheim, Germany and has 12 branches and sales offices across the country. The company's 240 employees generated sales of 96 million Euro in the 2014/15 financial year. Concat has been part of Meridian Group International Inc., USA since 2006.

Montana chose to use a tiering concept for the HPE 3PAR StoreServ. The business-critical databases are now stored on 20 highly performant SSD drives with a total gross capacity of around 38 TB. The rest are stored on standard hard disks. Now, a few months after the launch, Montana's IT team is analysing the capacity utilisation and performance of the two groups of drives. They may eventually have to move the data or increase the capacity of one of the areas manually. In future, if data volumes continue to grow, Friedrich plans to use the HPE 3PAR Dynamic Optimization Software Suite, which the company purchased together with the new hardware, to do this instead. It will be able to move the data between the two types of storage automatically.

## Advantages

### Increased availability and performance

The new HPE 3PAR StoreServ system also enables Montana to further increase the availability of the business-critical INTEX database, which is based on Microsoft SQL Server, by using the AlwaysOn feature. This uses a failover cluster service to mirror the databases, without the nodes requiring a shared storage area. "This increases our IO demands, but that's not a problem for the HPE 3PAR StoreServ. Today we can generate reports from the mirrored INTEX database very easily," says Friedrich.

The new HPE StoreEver MSL6480 Tape Library with LTO-6 drives also provides considerable benefits for Montana. The tapes have substantially more storage capacity and provide better performance than the previous LTO-4 drives. "This saves us a lot of work in terms of managing the tapes," says Friedrich. "Plus, the increased performance of the LTO-6 tapes and the more performant storage solution with fast SSD drives mean that we can get rid of our virtual tape library entirely. So we can backup our databases in a single stream. This simplifies our job hugely."

The data is still written to the tapes using HPE Data Protector software, which Montana plans to upgrade to the latest version (version 9) in the medium term. Should backup volumes increase more than expected, Montana plans to use HPE StoreOnce with the HPE StoreEver MSL6480 Tape Library and HPE Data Protector software. This solution will deduplicate up to 95 per cent of the storage capacity for data backups so that the available storage space can be used more efficiently. Friedrich is confident of the benefits this will provide: "It will make certain applications run even faster."

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