



# Conrad Electronic's highly available IT infrastructure guarantees fast shipments

HPE Mission Critical Services supports the IT systems in its logistics centre

## Objective

Creating a fast, highly available IT infrastructure for SAP EWM, and therefore the company's logistics processes

## Approach

Comparing solutions from different providers

## IT Matters

- HPE Mission Critical Services contract reduces the IT team's workload
- The comprehensive HPE solution makes the IT infrastructure easy to manage
- Repairs and maintenance work can be carried out without additional downtime

## Business Matters

- Highly available IT infrastructure ensures faster shipment of customer orders
- Improved customer service and all products ordered by 3pm are guaranteed to arrive with the customer on the next working day as part of a 24-hour turnaround service
- The company's business is protected against possible IT failures



To ensure that all shipments leave its new logistics centre on time, Conrad Electronic needs a highly available, scalable IT infrastructure. The company now runs SAP EWM on a Linux® cluster based on a comprehensive solution from HPE with two HPE 3PAR StoreServ storage systems. An HPE Mission Critical Services contract provides additional reassurance.

## Challenge

### High availability for high tech logistics

With over 750,000 items in its range, family-owned firm Conrad Electronic is one of Europe's largest technology suppliers. The company has been one of Germany's top ten most popular online stores since 1997, delivering its products to business and private customers, and its own branches, around the world. In order to ensure that the company was well-prepared for further growth, it recently invested €56 million in expanding the storage and shipping capacities of its logistics centre with a gigantic high tech distribution facility that can ship up to 100,000 packages per day.

“The solution has given us a highly available SAP EWM environment and improved our response times. This means that we can guarantee that our customers will receive their goods quickly and on time. And it also paves the way for further growth and better customer service here at Conrad Electronic.”

– Manfred Hofmann, IT – SAP Basis, Conrad Electronic

The two-storey building is 325 metres long, 175 metres wide and 23 metres tall, giving Conrad Electronic a total of more than 100,000 square metres of floor space for its logistics activities. A new, fully-automated shuttle system currently runs 375 shuttles through a network of 60 shuttle and container lifts, providing access to 200,000 storage areas.

“Around 40,000 packages leave the building each day, and at peak times that number can reach 68,000. This equates to annual volumes of around nine million shipments. In order to keep the promises we make to our customers in terms of delivery times, we need a very highly available SAP environment,” explains Manfred Hofmann, the member of Conrad Electronic’s IT team responsible for the SAP Basis.

As soon as goods arrive in Conrad Electronic’s distribution centre, they begin a journey through each part of the logistics chain. The company uses SAP to manage all of the processes and technology in the new warehouse.

Until recently, it had been using SAP Warehouse Management (SAP WM). However, the company made the decision to replace it step-by-step with SAP Extended Warehouse Management software (SAP EWM), in order to ensure that all of the underlying systems such as the warehouse management and material flow control systems, would no longer have to be updated individually. “This step means that in future, we can talk to the PLCs directly from SAP EWM without having to go through the underlying systems, which will save us a great deal of work when it comes to updates going forward,” says Hofmann.

“The old package was ideal for us in the past,” he continues. But the hardware solution was coming to the end of its useful life. “And as we recently decided to focus more heavily on Linux solutions within the company as a whole, we also wanted to use a Linux cluster for the new IT infrastructure.”



## Solution

### **HPE 3PAR StoreServ storage with Linux cluster**

The most important things for Conrad Electronic, aside from the high availability and level of redundancy of the new solution, were that it would guarantee both a high degree of scalability for future growth and incredibly fast response times.

They also wanted the entire solution to come from a single supplier. The project had a strict deadline. The company had just seven months to design and implement the new IT infrastructure and SAP EWM, as it needed the solution to be up and running as soon as the new warehouse opened. “We had a very tight schedule. It was therefore important for us to find a partner that understood both its business and ours back-to-front,” remembers Hofmann. “We once again decided to go with Hewlett Packard Enterprise and COMLINE – we had worked successfully with them in the past and the reliability of the solutions and outstanding Mission Critical Services contract had ensured that our SAP system had not failed once in five years. HPE also got the nod because its staff really understood our needs.”

In logistics, speed is everything. A huge number of steps need to follow one after the other incredibly quickly to ensure that the processes all run smoothly. To ensure that a container full of picked goods makes its way quickly and safely through the warehouse, SAP EWM has to detect a response on the path between two light barriers. Conrad Electronic’s logistics area has a huge number of computing operations like this to contend with. “System performance is important as it needs to be high enough to enable us to carry out a variety of these types of operations at great speed – and the new solution from HPE copes fantastically,” praises Hofmann.

The high availability of the SAP applications is ensured by the HPE Serviceguard Extension software for SAP for Linux, as it was in the old solution. This solution monitors the database system automatically so that the right measures can be taken in the event of a problem.

Once the infrastructure had been installed, HPE and COMLINE ensured that the data was migrated to SAP EWM smoothly. Again, Conrad Electronic wanted to play it safe, and had the suppliers agree to a guaranteed uptime of 99.91 per cent during the migration. The entire project was completed within the timeframe and on budget, and the solution was ready with the new warehouse.

## Case study

Conrad Electronic

## Industry

Online retail

## Customer at a glance

### Application

SAP EWM

### Hardware

- HPE 3PAR StoreServ 7200 2-N storage base
- HPE 3PAR 7000
- HPE StoreEver MSL8096 MSL G3 series
- HPE ProLiant DL380 Gen8 server
- HPE 5820AF-24XG switch
- HPE SN3000B 24/12 FC switch

### Software

- HPE Serviceguard Extension for SAP
- HPE 3PAR Remote Copy software

### HPE services

- HPE Technology Services
- HPE Mission Critical partnership
- SAP consulting
- Networking and platform migration service for SAP

## Our solution partners

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“The experts at Hewlett Packard Enterprise really understood our requirements. They know what’s important in the ecommerce business.”

– Manfred Hofmann, IT – SAP Basis, Conrad Electronic

## Benefit

### Smooth logistics

Conrad Electronic also ensures the high availability of its infrastructure through an HPE Mission Critical Services contract. Under its terms, HPE guarantees 99.91 per cent uptime for business-critical IT services. As well as around-the-clock support, the retailer also receives proactive and reactive services to ensure that its IT environment is always running at its best.

HPE provides a German-speaking team with named contacts for the company. If a problem arises, Conrad Electronic is guaranteed a solution within a fixed timeframe to ensure minimum downtime.

A few months on from the launch, Hofmann is very satisfied: “The HPE solution is tailored precisely to our needs, from the hardware and software right down to the services.” He lists a number of other benefits, including how easy the mission critical environment is to manage and that repair and maintenance work can be carried out without additional downtime. Conrad Electronic holds regular meetings with HPE experts to discuss changes to the IT infrastructure and its future expansion.

Hofmann states: “The solution has enabled us to achieve high availability for our SAP EWM environment and meet our target response times. This means that we can guarantee that our customers will receive their goods quickly and on time. And it also paves the way for further growth and better customer service here at Conrad Electronic.”

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