Ypsomed prepares for the future with renovated data center

HPE Synergy positions this medtech leader for a new wave of business acceleration

Objective
Remain a technology leader in medtech field

Approach
Rebuild data center using highly reliable, high-performance composable infrastructure
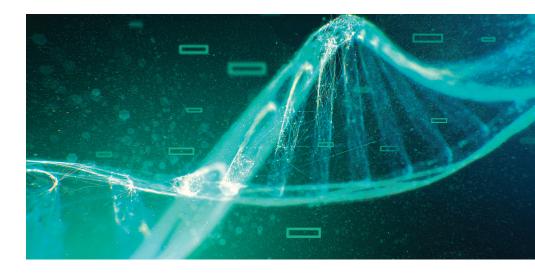
IT matters
- Enables fast, smooth migration of complex systems
- Prevents costly failures in IT and SAP® systems
- Delivers SAP reports and other results faster than ever

Business matters
- Enables global leadership in medical technology
- Supports growing business needs at every level of the organization
- Opens new opportunities for business expansion

Ypsomed had outgrown its IT infrastructure and wanted to position itself for ongoing growth. Together, HPE and Ypsomed's longtime IT partner, WAGNER AG, needed to migrate the Swiss medtech company to a new, modern data center platform that would take them into the future. For this endeavor, they chose HPE Synergy composable infrastructure.

Challenge

The Ypsomed Group is among the most innovative medical technology companies in the world and is a leading developer and manufacturer of injection and infusion systems for self-medication. Based in Burgdorf, Switzerland, this recognized pioneer in self-care medication employs more than 1,500 people at production sites and subsidiaries worldwide.

In an industry as competitive as medtech, it's extremely important to be a leader—not just in the core business but also in IT. Ypsomed has done both.

According to Fernand Portenier, head of IT at Ypsomed, the importance of IT to every corporate area and process at Ypsomed has been growing steadily for several years. Of late, the need for a high-performing, modern data center infrastructure and central IT platform became critically important to his team and the entire company.

> "With HPE Synergy, we have a very reliable and highly performing new IT platform that has enabled us to further increase the power of IT within the company."
>
> – Fernand Portenier, head of IT, Ypsomed AG

Together, HPE and WAGNER AG deliver increased reliability and performance, while positioning Ypsomed for the future with HPE Synergy composable infrastructure.

Big demands, limited options

Ypsomed's needs were clear. Its new infrastructure had to be powerful, highly performant, and scalable—and, at the same time, flexible and reliable. Not many solutions could deliver all of those requirements, which simplified the search for Portenier and system engineer Manuel Maurer, who oversees virtualization and storage systems at Ypsomed.

Two solutions were shortlisted to replace Ypsomed's outdated infrastructure:

1. A new system from the same manufacturer as the existing infrastructure

2. HPE Synergy composable infrastructure

A refresh of the existing system was also considered but quickly dismissed. "It would have been quite possible to replace only single blades and keep the chassis. Looking at the future, however, only a complete replacement made sense," says Maurer. In addition to better meeting future needs, the Ypsomed team knew a complete replacement would make its migration tasks much easier.

Another challenge for Ypsomed was timing. Because the company had only two large SAP maintenance windows each year, the deadline for the entire transition had to match those windows, which meant installation would need to be completed by November 2018. As the deadline neared, Ypsomed reviewed its two possible solutions.

Solution

Initially, it seemed both HPE Synergy and the current manufacturer could fulfill the basic requirements for Ypsomed's new infrastructure and both could support the planned migration to an SAP HANA® in-memory database. However, after visiting an existing HPE Synergy customer to see the solution in action, a favorite quickly emerged. Portenier said, "HPE had the solution that best suited us and was also very compelling financially."

Another factor in Ypsomed's decision to go with Synergy was that HPE was not entirely new to them. HPE servers had already been in operation for some time at several of Ypsomed's smaller locations and subsidiaries, and the company was very satisfied with HPE's hardware, software, and—above all—its service.

"Synergy is used in the most critical area of our business. This requires very high availability and, therefore, a great deal of trust in the manufacturer," said Portenier.

The new engine of informatics

By the end of 2018, Ypsomed had renovated its entire data center and moved it to HPE Synergy.

All Ypsomed workloads now run on HPE Synergy, including the entire SAP, Citrix®, and Exchange environment, as well as the telephony and unified communication solution of a third-party manufacturer. HPE Synergy is also the engine of a new manufacturing execution system (MES) that links Ypsomed's enterprise resource planning (ERP) with its plant and machine controls, a capability that's increasingly important in the age of digitalization.

In order to ensure the highest possible failover, the company now operates two almost identically equipped data centers, each with two HPE Synergy chassis. In turn, the HPE Synergy 12000 Frames are equipped with HPE Synergy 480 Gen10 Compute Modules with Intel® Xeon® processors, which offer a very high storage capacity and processor power.

Benefits

Problem-free migration

According to Maurer, even though many of the servers were validated systems, migrating the workloads was not a major technical challenge thanks to the complete virtualization in the server environment. The only small issue was integrating an existing third-party storage system, but it worked perfectly in the end.

"Synergy is very easy to integrate. In addition, it is possible to work modularly, which we very much appreciate in IT—in addition to the simple management of the solution," says Maurer.

A much larger task was the aforementioned switch from classic databases (Oracle in the SAP environment and SQL in the MES environment) to a common, new in-memory database (SAP HANA). This led, for example, to a brief, quasi-shutdown of business during the year. In addition, Ypsomed went from Windows® to Linux®, a platform that wasn't yet widely used at the company and the team had to check around 50 interfaces on the SAP system.

Given its complexity, the SAP environment was the last to be migrated, on the pre-determined deadline of November 2018. The schedule was tight, but, according to Portenier, his team was able to stay on track. "Due to the fast delivery and the smooth cooperation with HPE and WAGNER AG, the project was comparatively stress-free and we were able to meet all deadlines," he said.

Next-level performance

So far, the new HPE Synergy infrastructure has been running smoothly and without interruptions—just as expected. This is important, especially in Ypsomed's field.

"In medical technology, recording must be timely and complete. Even the smallest failure of the IT or SAP systems can lead to a great deal of administrative work and—even if production is not affected at all—high costs," says Portenier.

Ypsomed is not only finding its new HPE Synergy environment to be very reliable, but also very powerful.

"Compared to the old systems, there is a clear increase in performance," says Maurer. Reports from SAP, for example, can be created much faster. The performance boost is attributable both to the new HPE Synergy server and the new SAP HANA database—two solutions that, according to Portenier, "innately" get along very well.

Platform for growth

The result of the increased reliability and performance is a broader implementation of IT throughout the company. And that, in turn, is inspiring future projects. In fact, an expansion of the HPE Synergy infrastructure is already planned. "We want to procure additional hardware for setting up an SAP sandbox," says Portenier. In doing so his team will be able to count on the tremendous scalability of the HPE Synergy system. And according to Maurer, HPE Synergy can be easily expanded.

Customer at a glance

Solution

The Ypsomed Group, a leading global medtech company, needed to upgrade its data center to stay on the cutting-edge of its technology-driven industry. After researching options, the company migrated all workloads to HPE Synergy, including the entire SAP, Citrix, and Exchange environment, as well as the telephony and unified communication solution of a third-party manufacturer. Ypsomed now operates two redundant data centers, each with two HPE Synergy chassis. The HPE Synergy 12000 Frames are equipped with HPE Synergy 480 Gen10 Compute Modules with Intel Xeon processors, for high storage capacity and processor power. The company is now well equipped to achieve its plans for expansion.

Hardware

• HPE Synergy 12000 Frames

• HPE Synergy 480 Gen10 Compute Modules with Intel Xeon processors

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– Fernand Portenier, head of IT, Ypsomed AG

HPE Synergy will also support many more new business requirements and processes in the future. For example, in addition to traditional workloads, other more modern workloads could be added, including those related to Big Data. One Ypsomed partner is currently developing a Hadoop cluster for testing purposes. If the solution turns out to show potential and make economic sense, Portenier says he can well imagine in-sourcing it and having it run on HPE Synergy as well.

Until then, Portenier and his 60-person IT team at Ypsomed have plenty to do. In addition to various other technology projects, the Swiss medtech company is planning to enter the U.S. market in 2019 and is also commissioning a new production site in northeastern Germany.

Ypsomed has big plans to keep growing, and the company is fully prepared, thanks to its new HPE Synergy platform.

Learn more at
hpe.com/synergy

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