Humana milks the benefits of portal technology with IBM and Sysdat

Overview

■ **The Challenge**
Link employees and suppliers more effectively; help ensure high availability by implementing a more reliable infrastucture; prepare for deployment of new ERP system

■ **The Solution**
Built a Web portal using IBM WebSphere on an IBM System i5 550; consolidated multiple AS/400 and Intel-based servers; implemented a high availability solution

■ **The Benefit**
Simplified access to information for both employees and suppliers, for reduced cost and increased user satisfaction; created a more resilient environment with consolidated, high availability solution; infrastructure ready for SAP R/3 Enterprise software

Based in Germany, the Humana Milchunion group of companies is a cooperative representing more than 6,000 milk suppliers, and one of the leading dairy-products producing businesses in Europe. It produces diverse, high-quality products, such as fresh milk, butter, dessert specialties, ice cream, cheese and others. Humana also manufactures a range of infant formulas and baby food, exported to more than 30 countries worldwide.

The perishable nature of Humana's high quality milk products necessitates rapid, efficient logistics. The company's focus is on the availability of core IT systems and on preserving easy and secure access to data, to maintain customer and supplier satisfaction. In order to assure continued high availability for its systems and applications, and to improve its disaster recovery capabilities, Humana selected an

IBM System i5 550 as the core of a new mirrored IT infrastructure.

Hans-Hermann Rebert, CIO of Humana, comments: "The i550 with ORION high-availability software gives Humana a single, highly available environment for all business-critical systems. This will help us to guarantee the renowned Humana quality and efficiency – 24/7, 365 days a year."

A gateway to new opportunity

As part of the new solution, Humana aimed to increase its administrative efficiency by modernising its existing applications. Many of these "Greenscreen" applications – such as one which controls payments to suppliers – have grown over time and been optimized to the needs of Humana. On the new server platform, they appear with an up-to-date interface, though still running the same back-end source code.

IBM Premier Business Partner SYSDAT (www.sysdat.de) used IBM WebSphere Portal to enable Humana employees and suppliers to use selected applications – including Lotus Domino, traditional AS/400 applications, and in the near future, SAP applications – through a single graphical interface. This Web-based portal provides highly secure access to multiple applications without requiring users to sign into each one individually, and presents legacy functionality in a clear graphical

environment. The portal runs on the new i550, and acts as a centralized provider of user specific applitications abd data.

Says Hans-Hermann Rebert, "With the WebSphere portal, users no longer need to access multiple applications to do their work, so efficiency, speed and ease of use have all increased significantly. As ever, SYSDAT created an excellent solution – providing not only the new System i5 solution and its SAN-Integration along with realization of the high-availability concept, but also designing and building the portal."

Reliable consolidation

The i550 solution has enabled Humana to simplify its infrastructure, replacing two iSeries servers used in the past (HR and production) and consolidating several Microsoft® Windows® servers to the Integrated xSeries Server (IXS) inside the i550 chassis. Hans-Hermann Rebert comments, "The reliability of the systems and the low TCO of the entire IBM environment were the reasons why the concept of SYSDAT and IBM convinced us, both in terms of technology and economy. Simone Bode, Sales Representative at SYSDAT GmbH, adds: "In cooperation with IBM we were able to build an offer

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CIO, Humana Milchunion eG

for the new System i5 platform that was very attractive to the customer in terms of TCO."

"The reliability and autonomic management features of the System i5 platform allow us to have a relatively small IT department, which helps to reduce the total cost of ownership. We concluded that no other system could support our business so cost-effectively," comments Rebert, based on his long-standing System i expertise.

Building a stable solution

Humana also worked with SYSDAT to deploy its new high-availability environment. "Taking the high demands of Humana Milchunion into account, it was clear that the new infrastructure would have to be easy to administrate, reliable and scalable," says Oliver Wiechmann, Head of iSeries at SYSDAT GmbH.

The solution uses Vision ORION software to mirror production data from the i550 to an older i520, housed in a different building for added protection against disaster. The new i550 – which includes a partition running Linux – is connected to an IBM TotalStorage DS6800 storage server, which offers highly available storage for business-critical data. IBM Tivoli Storage Manager software is used to manage automatic backup and restore processes over the Humana storage area network.

"The new i550 has given us ample headroom for future growth, and the stability required for reliable logistics," says Hans-Hermann Rebert. "It has also improved the performance of our existing applications, and provided a powerful platform on which to deploy our new SAP R/3 Enterprise software."