

» CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

A STRONG PAIR TO COUNTER IT DOWNTIME

MONITORING AND MULTI-VENDOR MAINTENANCE
FROM A SINGLE SOURCE

INITIAL SITUATION

- + AUTOMOTIVE SUPPLIER
- + 1,280 EMPLOYEES
- + FOUR LOCATIONS
- + PRODUCTION AND LOGISTICS

IT

- + HETEROGENEOUS, EVOLVED IT LANDSCAPE
- + ISLAND SOLUTIONS
- + DEVICES FROM DIFFERENT MANUFACTURERS
- + HYBRID SYSTEM WITH AROUND 90 SERVERS
- + ACCESS CONTROL SYSTEM
- + HEAT SENSORS

THE CHALLENGE

- + IT LANDSCAPE STABILITY
- + MONITORING THE HETEROGENEOUS SYSTEM ENVIRONMENT
- + FAST, UNCOMPLICATED HARDWARE MAINTENANCE
- + AVOIDANCE OR MINIMIZATION OF DOWNTIMES

THE SOLUTION

- + MONITORING OF HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE ALONG WITH MULTI-VENDOR MAINTENANCE FROM A SINGLE SOURCE
- + SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT
- + FAST RECTIFICATION OF MALFUNCTIONS IN HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE
- + PERSONAL SUPPORT
- + QUALIFIED REPORTING AND REVIEWS

FOR MANY COMPANIES, AN IT LANDSCAPE THAT RUNS REALLY SMOOTHLY IS ESSENTIAL. YET IT'S NOT EASY TO ACHIEVE. THE TASK OF MONITORING, MAINTAINING, AND OPERATING A SYSTEM ENVIRONMENT THAT IS OFTEN EXTREMELY HETEROGENEOUS WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF COMPONENTS CAN BRING IT DEPARTMENTS TO THE LIMITS OF THEIR ABILITIES. **IT MONITORING IN COMBINATION WITH A SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT AND MULTI-VENDOR MAINTENANCE** CAN PROVIDE A SOLUTION. IN THIS CASE, WE USE A FICTIONAL BUT EXTREMELY REALISTIC EXAMPLE TO ILLUSTRATE WHEN THIS MAKES SENSE, HOW IT IS ACHIEVED, AND WHAT BENEFITS IT PROVIDES. LET'S TAKE A LARGE MID-MARKET COMPANY THAT WE'LL CALL ABCD AUTOMOTIVE...

THE INITIAL SITUATION

ABCD Automotive is an automotive supplier with 1,280 employees. It produces textile, leather, and imitation leather covers for car seats. Its main customers are large car producers. The company has four sites: The headquarters in Raunheim, near Frankfurt, and production subsidiaries in Augsburg, Filderstadt (near Stuttgart) and Gifhorn (near Wolfsburg). Each subsidiary has one production facility and a warehouse. The heart of the company is its headquarters in Raunheim. As well as being the largest production site, it is where all strategic business decisions are made. Distribution, marketing, sales management, finance, and quality management are all accommodated at the headquarters. The family-run company was founded 52 years ago as a small 5-person enterprise. Today, it's the leading manufacturer of car seat covers in Germany. The company grew step by step, and so did its IT landscape.

THE COMPANY'S IT

The evolved system structure resulted in a high level of heterogeneity. The IT landscape contains hardware and software from diverse manufacturers: DELL, HPE, Cisco, IBM, and an SAP ERP system for all business activities such as finance, purchasing, sales, logistics, HR planning, and production management. Added to this is Outlook along with a voice infrastructure that handles internal and external telephone calls as well as audio and video conferencing. The main data center has around 50 servers and is located at the headquarters in Raunheim. There are smaller server units of 10 to 15 servers each at the subsidiaries. Backups take place using a hybrid cloud/headquarters system. At the main data center, an access control system ensures that unauthorized persons are not able to access the digital heart of the company. Heat sensors monitor the server and room temperature.

THE CHALLENGE

The decentralized, heterogeneous IT landscape means that the head of IT - let's call him Mark Fox - and the infrastructure team face a range of challenges. "As a result of the evolved structure, our IT system has various island solutions which, in their entirety, are difficult to monitor. The large number of different devices and manufacturers' means that we need a broad range of specialist knowledge that's hard to achieve and maintain," explains Fox.

But despite this diversity, a functioning IT landscape is an absolute must. "A delayed delivery due to an IT fault affecting production, logistics, or the ERP system would result in major damage to our reputation in addition to the financial loss," the IT manager tells us. Each morning, he and his team would check the IT landscape to see whether problems, faults, or even downtimes had occurred. This vital task took two employees about three hours each day.

"It's an enormous amount of work, and was hard to get done, especially when members of staff were ill or on holiday," explains Fox. In addition, a fault in the landscape that occurred outside this checking time would be discovered only later on.

Once a fault had been discovered, rectifying it could be just as difficult as finding it. Due to the system heterogeneity, ABCD Automotive concluded service agreements with multiple manufacturers. "If we couldn't immediately tell which component had the fault, we had to work with different service hotlines and technicians from different manufacturers. This often took up a lot of time," Fox remembers.

He and his team therefore faced two challenges: First, monitoring the complex IT landscape as comprehensively as possible in order to detect faults in IT systems before a downtime occurred. Secondly, to rectify any faults as quickly as possible. Three problems were relevant here: The company lacked a systematic monitoring method,

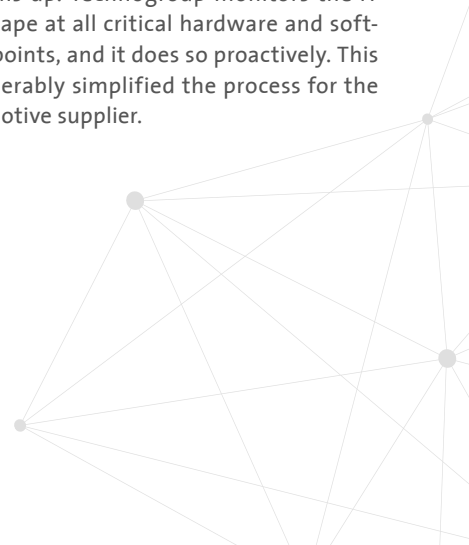
there was insufficient manpower, and the required expertise for each device in the company's complex, heterogeneous IT landscape was simply not there. Looking for a specialist partner was a logical step.

THE SOLUTION

During the search for a suitable solution, Fox came across the concept of multi-vendor hardware maintenance. The benefits were clear to him:

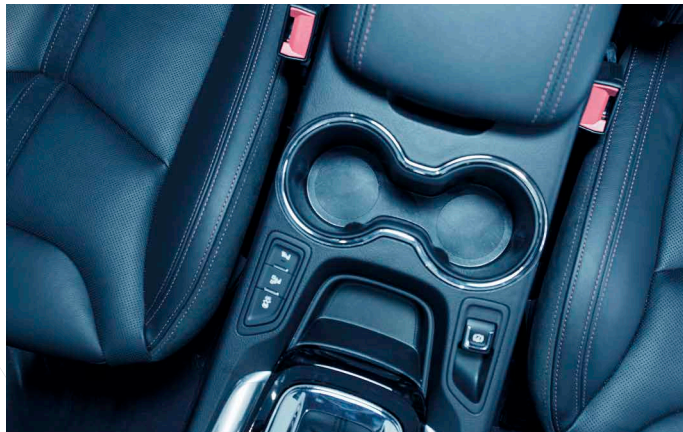
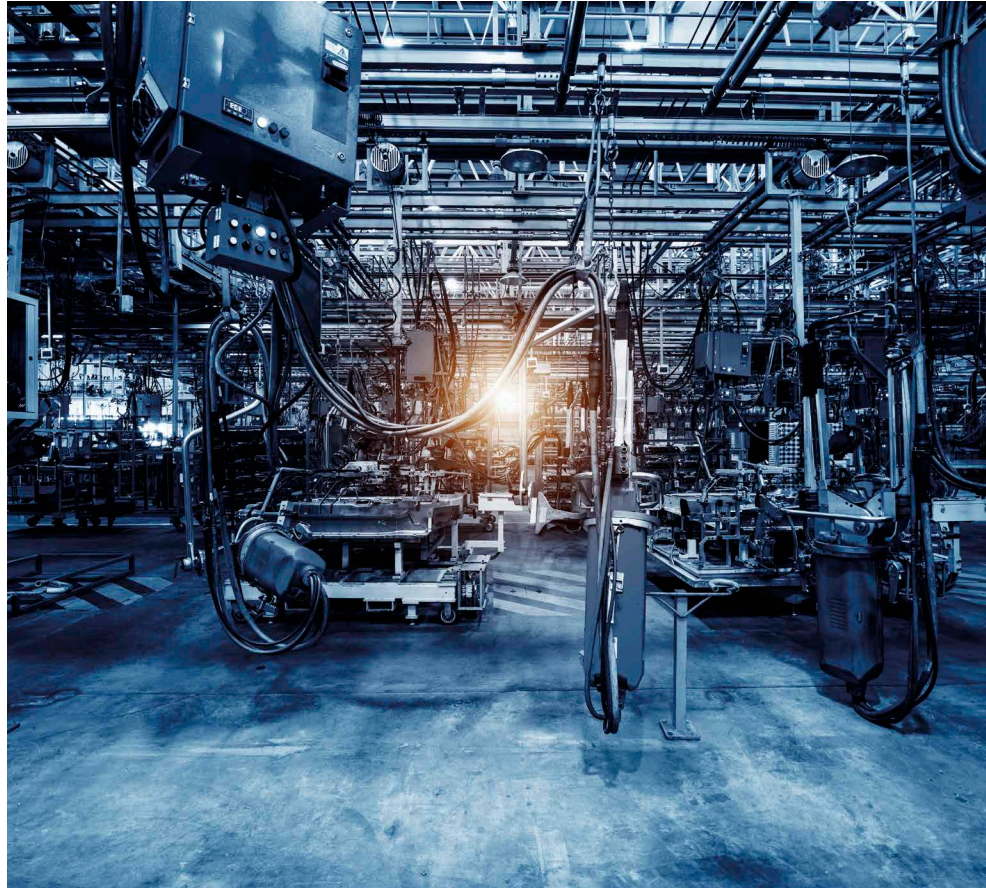
- + Cross-manufacturer maintenance with the relevant expertise
- + No further need for individual service agreements with multiple manufacturers, and an associated increase in cost transparency
- + A central, single point of contact for all malfunctions
- + 24/7 service
- + Hardware maintenance past the end of manufacturer support (end of service life/ EOSL), meaning that hardware and software can be used for much longer
- + A cost saving of up to 70% in comparison with maintenance by the various manufacturers

In Technogroup IT-Service GmbH, Fox found a service provider offering IT monitoring as well as hardware maintenance from a single source. "This was the ideal solution for us," he sums up. Technogroup monitors the IT landscape at all critical hardware and software points, and it does so proactively. This considerably simplified the process for the automotive supplier.



- + If a fault pops up or is looming in the near future, this is immediately displayed on the dashboard of ABCD Automotive's IT department as well as being reported to Technogroup's technicians.
- + A support ticket is automatically sent to Technogroup and a technician takes on the problem.
- + Technogroup makes contact with ABCD Automotive within 60 minutes. When a software problem occurs, Technogroup opens a support ticket directly with the responsible retailer or software manufacturer and passes the problem on. In the case of a hardware fault, a Technogroup technician will be on location with the required spare part within four hours. And this doesn't just apply to the headquarters in Raunheim: Technogroup has 18 locations in Germany/Austria/Switzerland, which means that technicians can reach all of the subsidiaries quickly.

Consequently, problems are quickly detected, the service team is automatically called to action in real time, and faults are rectified as quickly as possible. As a result, maintenance is proactive rather than reactive, and downtimes are minimized.



TECHNOGROUP

Technogroup is the market leader for third-party maintenance (TPM) in the Germany/Austria/Switzerland region. Around the world, the company offers upkeep, maintenance, and repair services for all common IT systems in data centers. Its comprehensive service packages help to avoid hardware downtimes, rectify such downtimes when

they do occur, and extend the lifetime of IT systems for companies in various sectors in a cost-effective manner. Among other things, additional services include monitoring, network services, IMAC services, modifications and updates, and the recycling of legacy systems. Thanks to comprehensive know-how and many years of experience in the indus-

try, Technogroup is able to offer a professional approach with a high service level and reduced costs. It was one of the first companies in the market to achieve certification in the areas of quality management, environmental management, and information security in accordance with ISO standards.

“FOR OUR CUSTOMERS, WE ARE **NOT A REPLACEABLE SUPPLIER**. WE’RE A **LONG-TERM PARTNER THEY CAN TRULY RELY ON.**” EXPLAINS KLAUS STÖCKERT, CEO OF TECHNOGROUP. “AS WELL AS STRIVING TO DO OUR JOB AS WELL AS WE POSSIBLY CAN, WE AIM TO KEEP THE IT LANDSCAPE OF CUSTOMERS IN CHECK AT ALL TIMES, PROVIDE THEM WITH HIGH-QUALITY ADVICE, AND SUPPLY FLEXIBLE SUPPORT THROUGH THE SERVICES WE OFFER.”

“When Technogroup presented us with the basic concept at our first meeting, we were particularly pleased with the fact that the entire solution comes from a single source and that our IT department only needs to collaborate with the service provider rather than initiating the processes. This frees up capacity that we need for further developments and the challenges of digitalization,” Fox says. Following initial talks, Technogroup created a requirement analysis. This involved examining the IT landscape of ABCD Automotive and defining the devices to be monitored. “We use analyses of this kind to provide our customers with advice and to create a solution concept,” Felix Hofmeister explains. Hofmeister is an expert in monitoring solutions at Technogroup. “We present our solution to the customer and flesh it out together.” Once the concept and project plan have been agreed, Technogroup employees prepare the landscape for the implementation of the monitoring tool. They parameterize virtual machines in line with the individual needs of each customer. “This does not affect business and processes at the customer’s company,” Hofmeister stresses. Depending on the size of the project, the implemen-

tation phase lasts between 10 and 20 days. Afterwards, Technogroup is fully responsible for monitoring the landscape.

At ABCD Automotive, the company monitors the ERP system, hardware statuses, networks, operating systems and processes, file systems, application layer, temperature sensors at the data center (to avoid the overheating of servers), and the access control system for the data center at the headquarters. If a card reader isn’t working properly or if someone without authorization attempts to access the data center, a notification is sent to the ABCD Automotive dashboard. The same applies if a software fault occurs or an update is required. The customer can then react quickly and implement appropriate measures. This is a really effective procedure to prevent potential cyber-attacks or, if the worst comes to the worst, to keep damages as low as possible.

Server availability and throughput are displayed on the dashboard at the push of a button. “Because not all information is relevant to everyone, it makes sense to customize the dashboards in line with the spe-

cific needs of the user. This means that each project might require multiple dashboards - one for Technogroup, one for the head of IT, one for administrators, and one for the customer’s management level,” explains Hofmeister.

When working with customers, Technogroup focuses on professionalism, stability, and a sense of partnership. “Reviews take place regularly with customers in order to talk about the procedure so far and any future challenges,” Hofmeister says. “In addition, each customer benefits from custom reporting.” ABCD Automotive pays a package price that gives high cost transparency. “However,” Fox adds “the most important thing for us was having a single point of contact at all times. If there’s a problem, I know who to call. And the same technicians work with us all the time. They know our landscape. This makes for really effective teamwork on a partnership basis. If questions arise, they are answered quickly and without unnecessary bureaucracy. I can tell that it’s just as important to Technogroup’s experts that our IT landscape runs smoothly as it is to me and my team.”



www.technogroup.com



This content was produced with due care and to the best of our knowledge. It provides information about services rendered by Technogroup IT-Service GmbH. © 2020 Technogroup IT-Service GmbH