

MONUMENT CHEMICAL COMPLETES DATA CENTER RENEWAL WITH REALDOLMEN



Monument Chemical's Antwerp site successfully migrated to a virtual server and storage environment. Realdolmen managed the project, setting up a solution that guarantees business continuity and IT security.

Monument Chemical is a family-owned business out of Indianapolis, Indiana, operating production sites in Antwerp, Belgium, Brandenburg, Kentucky, and Houston and Baytown, Texas. The Antwerp site produces chemicals and solvents, and is also active in custom processing, offering distillation and reaction capacity to customers in the chemical industry. Monument Chemical Antwerp used to be part of the German company Haltermann, which started its operations in the Antwerp harbor in the 1970s. Later on, the site was acquired by Dow.

Monument Chemical's IT department is centralized in the US. The company's sites all use a wide range of applications hosted in the group's central data center. The Antwerp site is a remote office running several local applications on servers and storage in its own data center. In 2016, that local infrastructure needed to be renewed. To oversee the project, Monument Chemical Group Systems Administrator Bryan Bailey traveled to Antwerp. "From the very start, it was clear that we needed the support of a local partner", he said. Monument Chemical selected Realdolmen. "We had worked with Realdolmen on a previous project and knew they deliver quality service", said Diana De Peuter, Financial & IT Manager at Monument Chemical Antwerp. "The company had played an important part in the successful roll-out of Windows 7. We trust the team, so we wanted to have it on board for this project as well."

COMPLETE REDUNDANCY

Monument Chemical's challenge was clear: leading the server and storage environment into the virtual world. "At the time, we were running about ten physical servers", De Peuter explained. "Their replacement had become quite urgent." Today, the data center's lay-out looks completely different. The data center is based on a redundant set-up, with only one HP server hosting all virtualized applications, and one NetApp solution for storage. Among other things, the new environment hosts the company's file server, SQL server and several process control systems. Bailey: "The whole set-up is based on a VMware cluster. All backups are performed locally, but overnight the data is also replicated to our data center in the US." In other words: at the Antwerp site, all IT is redundant. Whatever component fails – be it a switch, VMware or NetApp – there's always another one available to take over and make sure IT availability is guaranteed. "That was the ultimate goal", Bailey explained. "Redundant infrastructure guarantees data and application availability. The end result is a reliable environment, including a functional solution for quick disaster recovery."

In the US, Monument Chemical employs experts for all IT infrastructure components. "Still, you can't manage everything remotely", Bailey added. "We are in different time zones and sometimes there is a little latency on the data connection." That's why Monument Chemical made the choice to send



in a local partner for this project. De Peuter: “We signed a Service Level Agreement with Realdolmen. Whenever something happens, Realdolmen is there to help us out.” As Antwerp and Houston are in different time zones, getting assistance from the US could take some time. Bailey: “And that’s time we don’t have. We are a process company. Any downtime has an immediate impact on our business.”

GUARANTEED BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Monument Chemical Antwerp was the group’s first site to migrate to VMware ESX v6. And a smooth migration it was, too. “There was some very efficient collaboration between Bryan and Realdolmen’s team”, De Peuter continued. “Realdolmen has a good understanding of our business and deployed the right experts.” All in all, Monument Chemical looks back at a successful project. Bailey: “For me personally, it was the first time I was involved in the migration to a virtual environment on this large scale. It was a very valuable experience. Realdolmen offered the right expertise, which made the migration a success. I am very pleased about the team work that was delivered. In fact, we are thinking about hiring Realdolmen for comparable projects in the US.”

Thanks to the renewal of the data center, Monument Chemical Antwerp is all set for the next couple of years. “It was about time we put that migration on the agenda”, De Peuter concluded. “Postponing the project would have increased the risk of an unstable and unreliable environment. That’s not a concern any longer. The new server and storage environment guarantees the continuity and security our business needs.”

Diana De Peuter, Financial & IT Manager at Monument Chemical in Antwerp: “Realdolmen implemented a completely new IT environment based on VMware and NetApp, which guarantees the availability of data and applications.”



REALDOLMEN AND NETAPP

These last years, Realdolmen has invested a lot of knowledge and support in developing its partnership with NetApp. We were proudly named Growth Partner of the Year last year and recently, we also picked up the SolidFire Partner of the Year award.

The NetApp strategy is based on the Data Fabric principle that gives organizations access to connect all data in any cloud to another cloud (private - service provider - public). In no time at all you can move and retrieve resources to/from the cloud yourself. An important aspect in this is the freedom of choice NetApp gives you in deciding which services to use without creating a lock-in with a cloud provider. You decide where and when you want to store or move data within a hybrid cloud.