

Marathon Helps MAN AG Enhance Customer Satisfaction

PROFILE

One of Europe's leading vehicle manufacturers
34,000 employees worldwide
Sold 80,000 commercial vehicles and 7,300 buses in 2006
Turnover: 8.7 billion Euro

ENVIRONMENT

Marathon everRun FT
Marathon everRun HA
Marathon SplitSite
HP DL 380
DELL 2650/2850
EMC, HDS, IBM SAN

WINDOWS APPLICATIONS

Microsoft Windows 2000/2003
Citrix Server Farm
Process control and production control software

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MAN Nutzfahrzeuge is one of Europe's leading vehicle manufacturers. The company offers a range of innovative and reliable trucks and buses which aim to set the standard in all of their market segments. The company also backs up its expertise and commitment to the industry with a range of services which allow customers to operate with maximum economy and efficiency.

To ensure a smooth operation of the MAN Group's commercial vehicles unit, all of its facilities are connected to MAN's central IT system. From a business performance perspective, it is vital that its servers are continuously available, as any unscheduled downtime could lead to a loss of data, applications, or in a worst case scenario, to a complete disruption of production and services.

That is why MAN IT Services use a fault tolerant-class availability solution from Marathon that protects the mission-critical applications of the commercial vehicles factory in Munich, and more than 200 locations in Germany and Europe.

MAN IT Services was originally introduced to the

technology by Marathon's German partner itauris. Following months of successful use, MAN IT Services now uses Marathon solutions across the company to protect mission-critical applications and data.

THE SITUATION: SERVE CUSTOMER NEEDS ONLINE WITHOUT INTERRUPTION

In the late 1990s, MAN's commercial vehicles unit decided to implement a new IT system to manage forklift truck operations at its factory in Munich. The system was originally installed on a Novell server, but MAN decided in 2000 to update the entire system by adopting Marathon's Endurance 4000 system to help protect the forklift management system against downtime.

Asmir Hrustanbegovic, IT specialist at MAN IT Services, who is in charge of MAN Group's servers together with his 18-strong team, comments, "Marathon did all we wanted, so after about three years of using Endurance 4000, we decided to upgrade to everRun FT to further protect our files and applications, and to ensure continuous availability of our servers."

Success Story

Following the implementation, other IT projects were undertaken to increase efficiency and reliability in other parts of the operation of the commercial vehicles unit. Staff at facilities around the country had been using individual laptops without direct access to company data or applications, and some outlets had been using outdated software. In 2002 MAN IT Services implemented a series of MS Terminal/Citrix Farms to be able to handle all updates centrally and improve the efficiency of the unit's operations across Germany. This effectively established a centralised network that allowed all staff, regardless of their location, to access all key applications and receive regular system updates.

MAN IT Services manages around 220 MS Terminal/Citrix Farms in 240 locations. "Being able to manage all our applications centrally from Munich has many advantages. The greatest is that it allows us to install any new software for all outlets at one go, which saves us a lot of time," Mr. Hrustanbegovic says. However, because of this, it is absolutely crucial that all servers are available at all times, as any unscheduled downtime at the head office in Munich would lead to severe delays during upgrades.

SOLUTION: DEFEND 24/7 OPERATIONS WITH MARATHON EVERRUN FT SOFTWARE

The servers of the commercial vehicles unit are now protected with Marathon's everRun FT to ensure that applications are accessible 24/7 - no matter what. "A disruption to the provision of data and applications would affect every employee, and in the worst case scenario, halt operations altogether. But with everRun FT, we no longer have to worry about downtime," Mr. Hrustanbegovic explains.

The state-of-the-art solution, using Marathon's everRun FT and SplitSite, allows two servers to operate simultaneously in 100 percent lock-step. This means that two Windows servers with the same software, applications and data, create a single virtual environment, transparently to the user. If one of the servers fails, no data is lost as the everRun environment will keep running with zero interruption on the remaining server. This creates a business continuity solution and eliminates the need for costly and complex failover processes, specialised applications or proprietary server hardware.

Marathon's SplitSite provides an additional layer of protection against larger-scale failures and disasters.

The two physical servers within the everRun FT environment are geographically separated to eliminate the risk of downtime associated with complete site outages.

"Only if both physical servers failed, we would be in trouble. However, this is practically impossible, and extremely unlikely even in theory. We are confident that our applications are continuously available with this technology," Mr. Hrustanbegovic says.

Depending on the level of importance of an application, MAN IT Services uses a single server, a Windows cluster or a Marathon system, with the most important applications always running on everRun FT. "We never put mission-critical applications on normal servers. We use everRun FT to be able to guarantee users constant access to mission-critical data and applications."

RESULTS: ELIMINATION OF SYSTEM FAILURE AND INCREASED COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

The consequences of any unscheduled downtime would not only jeopardise production at the factory in Munich, but also at the unit's 240 outlets. "In practice, if an employee was unable to connect to the central network because a server was down, all data on customers and products would become unavailable. This would mean that many of our employees would be unable to do their jobs, and we would have many unhappy customers to deal with," Mr. Hrustanbegovic explains.

Throughout the MAN Group, Mr. Hrustanbegovic and his team are responsible for around 1,800 servers and about 30,000 connected computers. Following many years of using Marathon's products, the group will implement more everRun systems in the future if necessary. "Should we need to protect more of our mission-critical data and applications against downtime, we will definitely go with everRun," Mr. Hrustanbegovic concludes.

Success Story

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