

Carl Christensen Reinforces its Commitment to Quality by Embracing Curvature's World-Class IT Infrastructure Design and Implementation Services

Aktieselskabet Carl Christensen (CAC) is a leading supplier of spare parts to the automotive, industrial and marine markets. Founded by Carl Christensen in 1927, the company's origins focused on selling car parts, including batteries, speedometers and more, for Ford and General Motors cars that were imported from the United States. Backed by an overarching commitment to quality, the company's business quickly prospered and CAC expanded to include motor renovations.

Over the years, the operation continued to grow in popularity, earning its founder the nickname "Cylinder Carl." The endearing moniker also has been enduring: Distribution agreements struck during that time—with ring and gasket maker Goetze as well as piston provider Mahle—remain active today. From its modest beginnings in a basement in Aarhus, the 100 percent Danish-owned company has constantly worked to provide improved services and benefits for its customers.

CAC takes particular pride in its online auto parts ordering system, which has been implemented countrywide for wholesalers. The company also works closely with leading international manufacturers of components, stocking some 70,000 items in its warehouses with access to more than 450,000 online, while maintaining a sterling reputation for delivering original equipment quality.

The Challenge

Faced with rapid business expansion, the 600-employee company needed to increase the capacity of its existing IT and network infrastructure as well as bolster system resiliency to ensure the highest levels of network uptime and IT reliability. "We needed a fast, secure IT environment to support our 24/7 operation," explains Asger R. Poulsen, CIO at Carl Christensen. "Network and system redundancy were equally important as our current solution was contained on one network address, which made us vulnerable to downtime should an outage occur."

To meet this critical business demand, in particular, CAC sought a robust disaster recovery solution with automatic failover from the primary to a backup location in the event of any planned or unplanned downtime. The company invited tenders from a variety of service providers, including Curvature, a long-time service provider that had provided top-notch IT service and support previously. "We had a solid history and strong collaboration with Curvature prior," says Poulsen. "Based on a superior IT infrastructure design and highly competitive proposal, we extended our partnership to address this latest round of rigorous requirements. We haven't had second thoughts on our collaboration."

The Solution

During the subsequent implementation of the new IT environment, the team from Curvature worked diligently to provide a seamless cutover, making most improvements and changes during evenings and weekends to minimize disruptions. "In practice, the cutover was completely transparent to our uses," adds Poulsen. "We had no downtime during normal work hours. That was an important success criteria for us. The smooth transition was achieved through the application of Curvature's skilled and dedicated workforce."

The solution deployed by Curvature included a geographically separated storage cluster based on an IBM SAN Volume Controller (SVC) and IBM Storwize V5000 flash and disk storage system. To deliver the highest levels of data availability, the team mirrored both production systems. "We were confident in the approach taken by the Curvature engineers as they explained the process, answered all our questions and followed through on each step," recalls Poulsen. "The team was completely hands-on, which made it easy to get help when we needed it."

The Benefits

This personal touch became readily apparent when CAC's original datacenter was flooded on the day after the fully redundant system went live. Luckily, the entire business was up and running on the new, resilient IT infrastructure, so CAC completely avoided a potentially catastrophic business disruption altogether. Thanks to Curvature, CAC literally weathered the storm without any impact to its customers or operations.

"We immediately had the opportunity to demonstrate that we had done our due diligence and picked the right partner," concludes Poulsen. "So I can strongly recommend Curvature for their skills, dedication and comprehensive infrastructure design, implementation and support services. With Curvature on our team, we can continue to strengthen our leadership position in the Danish market while setting an example for successful businesses around the world to follow."