

DKI Group Partners with Curvature to Upgrade Critical IT Infrastructure While Ensuring Stability to Better Address Rapid Business Growth

The roots of Denmark-based DKI Group began in 1989 when Ole Falengreen Nielsen created a trading company to supply all types of household products to the Scandinavian retail market. Since its founding, the family-owned Danish company has experienced rapid growth and business diversification to better address customers' emerging needs.

Over the years, *Børsen*, the daily newspaper considered the Danish equivalent of the Financial Times or Wall Street Journal, has recognized DKI for its impressive growth track record. In 2000, the company aligned its thriving operations along four primary business lines, encompassing household goods, candles and napkins, beverages as well as cheese and dairy products.

In the new millennium, the DKI Group continued to expand, introducing warehousing and logistics capabilities and moving to larger facilities while extending product offerings into new categories. Today, a group of 10 companies supplies and distributes goods to the retail trade in Northern Europe and Scandinavia under private label agreements as well as its own brands.

The Challenge

While DKI Group was growing rapidly with the addition of new products and capabilities, the technology infrastructure underpinning its operations was nearing end of life. "Technology plays a significant role in my daily job," explains Christian Hingelberg Hangaard, finance director and CFO for DKI Group. "Our IT infrastructure is the key to our entire business as it connects us to our vital customers and suppliers via EDI and integrates seamlessly with our Microsoft Dynamics NAV ERP software."

Since the company's inception, DKI Group had relied on internal IT support to ensure maximum uptime of critical business resources. As the organization approached an entire system refresh, however, it became apparent a boost in IT efficiency could be realized by enlisting the services of an independent IT support organization. "We'd had all our IT inside—since the start of the business—but we needed a more stable and flexible IT architecture," recalls Hangaard. "We realized that outside IT experts could help us optimize our IT environment."

To assist in the IT refresh project, Hangaard hired two IT consultants to guide a seamless evaluation and deployment process. Aside from reviewing options to virtualize a good portion of its IT architecture, the company also sought an experienced provider of IT service and support that could remove the daily management burden from the small in-house IT team.

After exploring the landscape of IT solutions providers, the team approached Curvature, a global provider of IT infrastructure and support with a local presence in Denmark. Curvature's extensive experience in managing, maintaining and upgrading mission-critical IT environments, along with local hands-on support, would provide DKI Group with comprehensive IT lifecycle management.

"Curvature comes from a strong hardware background," Hangaard says. "They also provided us with a lot of options in terms of what could be managed on a daily basis—and that was important as we wanted a true technology partner." Curvature also stood out because of its extensive knowledge in network security and 24/7 infrastructure support, both equally important in ensuring DKI Group could maintain its strict network uptime requirements.

The Solution

After choosing Curvature, DKI Group worked with its new IT partner to devise a best-of-class approach to improve IT efficiency and lower costs. To that end, Curvature recommended a blend of new and pre-owned hardware to optimize DKI Group's budget without making any compromises in performance or security. "We came up with a solution for what we



needed to achieve,” recalls Hangaard. “Curvature met all of our performance requirements and then suggested adding pre-owned servers, which reduced our capital expenditures significantly.”

Besides the trio of IBM Storwize V7000 servers, the plan included installation of 35 virtual servers and new Cisco firewalls. By including pre-owned servers in the hardware mix, DKI Group was able to reduce this initial budget projection by more than 20 percent, enabling the savings to be reallocated to other areas. “By purchasing some pre-owned hardware, we lowered our server budget significantly,” says Hangaard. “What this meant is we could buy higher-level Cisco firewalls with greater functionality.”

Together, Curvature and DKI Group implemented the more powerful IT infrastructure, designed to meet the company’s requirement for maintaining 99.8 percent uptime. “There was a lot of teamwork,” says Hangaard. “Local touch is important. Curvature was a good resource as they had a lot of knowledge on what we needed to meet all our business objectives.”

The Benefits

The 20 percent savings recognized from pre-owned servers permitted Hangaard to bolster security, which is critical for keeping DKI Group’s business safe and thriving. “We liked that the savings were significant and would not sacrifice any reliability or capability,” says Hangaard. “Curvature gave us the freedom to apply our budget where it made the most sense from a performance and ROI perspective.”

Equally important is the fact that Curvature’s local Denmark team will be responsible for maintaining the refreshed IT environment 24/7. “Local touch is very important to us and we have no worries that Curvature will take good care of our system in the future.”

Curvature’s service desk monitoring will ensure DKI Group’s IT environment runs around the clock to support crucial business operations. “It gives us peace of mind knowing that a team of experts is looking after our servers all the time,” adds Hangaard. “I am more relaxed knowing that we have a stable, reliable system in place to serve our business for the next five years.”

Looking ahead, Hangaard believes that with Curvature’s help, DKI Group will sustain its rapid business growth of 25 percent annually while ensuring the highest levels of service to customers and suppliers. “We want to work smarter, not harder,” he concludes. “With Curvature as our IT services partner, we have the resources we need to serve our new IT environment, which enables us to focus on making the best possible business decisions.”

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