

Case study

The best SAP environment in the cloud



IT Services Nederland teams with Uniserver to free SAP environments from the data center

Industry

IT

Objective

Deliver the best SAP environment in a competitive, scalable, IaaS offering

Approach

Engage with HP PartnerOne Service Provider Uniserver to build and deliver a flexible, scalable hybrid cloud-based platform

IT matters

- Delivers superior performance and SLAs vs. purchased infrastructure
- Minimizes complexity associated with scaling and managing traditional hardware
- Allows IT to focus on platform development vs. hardware management

Business matters

- Paves the way for massive, instant scalability
- Avoids CAPEX associated with building new physical data centers
- Saves up to 20% in TCO vs. traditional infrastructure solutions



IT Services Nederland

“The value we’re bringing to the market is the SLA, the performance, the scalability, and the cost savings based on building these hybrid cloud SAP solutions on world class HP infrastructure.”

– Hans Hendrikx, Commercial Director, IT Services Nederland

IT Services Nederland was founded in 2002 to offer systems integration services in a rapidly changing business landscape. Helping retailers, technology companies, and housing cooperatives to navigate the increasing complexity of managing and deploying their own infrastructures, the technology leader has evolved as a leader in IaaS solutions. Recently, IT Services Nederland partnered with Uniserver, an HP PartnerOne Service Provider, to deliver a hybrid cloud-based SAP environment that boosts performance and SLAs while saving its customers up to 20% in TCO.

Stability in shifting sands

Delivering the most advanced cloud-based solutions to your customers can be a never-ending challenge for IT businesses. Every CIO wants their business environment to be smarter and leaner while offering new insights and more features. It seems counterintuitive that you could actually have it all.

But that's exactly what IT Services Nederland does for its customers. Launched in Venlo on Nederland's southern border with Germany, the technology leader has served customers in the markets of housing, retail, LED lighting, sleep solutions, and high technology for more than ten years.

"Our customers are continuously striving to do more with their IT environments, and it's our job to help them achieve that while making their lives easier," relates Hans Hendrikx, commercial director for IT Services Nederland. "Delivering these kinds of scalable, flexible solutions with the kind of simplicity our customers demand means doing some incredibly complex things for them behind the scenes. That's life in the IT business."

Adapting to the new normal

Recently, Hendrikx and team experienced a shift in the kinds of services its clients were asking for. "A few years ago, everyone wanted to own their hardware," Hendrikx recalls. "Consequently, most of our work involved designing and building infrastructure for our customers on-premise."

That trend has reversed itself, and IT Services Nederland has been on a journey to adapt accordingly. "Now, our customers don't want to invest in hardware anymore—they want to transform that investment into a service that can also be agile to business development. So we've been moving into the infrastructure as-a-service (IaaS) field."

To build, or not to build

Then the team found itself asking itself the same questions as its customers. "We knew we wanted to deliver this IaaS, but how do we get there? Do we build our own infrastructure, or do we look for a partner?" Hendrikx asks. "Because one of our strategies is to grow our presence as a systems integrator, we chose a partner who already had a world-class infrastructure."

That partner is Dutch technology leader Uniserver, an HP PartnerOne Service Provider. Already outfitted with four large data centers, each armed with HP ProLiant BladeSystem 460 Gen8 servers, HP 3PAR StoreServ and LeftHand P4500 storage, the VMware-based virtualized environment is perfect for customers using public, hybrid, and private cloud-based computing models.

An idea is born

The two businesses were introduced to each other a few years ago over a conversation about building a next-generation level of service to their customers. "We were just talking about the kinds of solutions that most businesses are based on—like SAP—and

we had this idea,” recalls Hugo van Diepen, co-founder and commercial director for Uniserver. “What if we asked our customers what it was from these solutions that they needed most, and set out to build it better?”

Hendrikx agreed. “Instead of every IT company trying to build and manage their own SAP environment, what if we fine-tuned this system and offered it as a service to our customers? And what if we could introduce this with better service level agreements (SLAs) and higher performance than a system they could build themselves?”

With that conversation began a partnership between the two organizations that eventually created a unique SAP hybrid cloud service to end customers. But there were still challenges to be met. “In Uniserver, we knew we had found a partner that could deliver the SLAs and performance, but we still had to build the solution to be competitive in the marketplace,” Hendrikx explains.

Traveling light

At first, the idea got a lot of attention in the market. “We had everyone’s interest almost immediately because it was a unique solution,” Hendrikx recalls. “However, we were still very much in a market that owned its own hardware. People liked the idea, but we were still fighting a very traditional view of technology.”

But then something changed. “After a couple years, people started realizing that managing their own platform was very difficult to do,” Hendrikx explains. “You need 24/7 service, you need to manage various applications that share a storage pool, you need to manage all this, but it was becoming unmanageable—suddenly everyone was looking to the cloud to save them from all this complexity.”

From their own sales cycle data, IT Services Nederland and Uniserver could see the change coming. “Five years ago, 2 out of 10 customers were interested in the cloud in our market,” van Diepen relates. “Today, that number has grown to 8 out of 10. Suddenly, businesses are thinking strategically about traveling light.”

Moving to the cloud

For customers of the team’s SAP hybrid cloud service, the IaaS solution means being free from the frustrations of performance issues and scalability worries. “One of our first customers was a large company with retail presences in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany who was going through a period of very aggressive growth,” Hendrikx relates. “They were worried about reliability and scalability as well as high availability.”

Through the IaaS solution delivered through IT Services Nederland and built on Uniserver’s HP data centers, the customer was able to move its SAP stack into the cloud. “It was a very smooth transition,” Hendrikx recalls. “Within two months, the migration was complete.”

Scalability delivered

Now operating on a combination of its own installed hardware and an SAP implementation at Uniserver, the customer has the best of both worlds. “They can manage their environment from their own data center, but when they want to scale, they don’t have to take the plunge and buy a bunch of new hardware,” Hendrikx relates. “It means they have the agility to handle massive growth at a moment’s notice.”

Customer at a glance

Cloud Platform

- UniStructure cloud platform
- MyUniserver customer portal
- Uniserver Cloud in a Box partner program

Application

- SAP
- VMware

Hardware

- HP ProLiant BladeSystem BL460c Gen8 Server Blades
- HP LeftHand P4500 Storage
- HP 3PAR StoreServ Storage
- HP FlexFabric
- HP BladeSystem c7000 Enclosures

HP Services

- HP Proactive Care Services with the Personalized Support* option

Saving up to 20% TCO

The team has also developed its own calculator to measure the TCO savings of moving to a hybrid cloud-based SAP environment. “When you look at the cost of doing this over a five-year period, the TCO of cloud-based infrastructure is 10–20 percent less expensive than owning your own hardware,” Hendrikx explains. “It’s not a tremendous savings by itself, but when you think of the flexibility and scalability you’re bringing to your business, it’s hard to argue.”

Built for tomorrow

The SAP solution is just the first of many initiatives IT Nederland and Uniserver are hoping to develop. “We’ve done it with SAP, and we’re planning on doing the same with other foundational apps,” Hendrikx sums up. “The value we’re bringing to the market is the SLA, the performance, the scalability, and the cost savings based on building these solutions on world class HP infrastructure. I don’t see why we can’t continue to deliver new offerings to address the ever-changing business needs of our customers.”

Our partners support



*Since this case study was completed, the Personalized Support option was retired. Customers can get more personalized collaboration by working with an assigned, local Account Support Manager included in Proactive Care Advanced service.

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