



Trim costs in a price-sensitive business

GRISARD-Gruppe is a diversified Swiss business active in bitumen and asphalt, real estate management, and fuel. GRISARD develops, refines, and distributes bitumen and asphalt for road construction, owns and manages investment and operating properties, and with nine other AVIA member companies operates around 600 AVIA service stations across Switzerland.

Because the petroleum business is extremely price sensitive, GRISARD constantly looks for ways to operate more cost-effectively. It had already moved most of its IT infrastructure, including its SAP estate, to a third-party hosting facility, but costs were high and services inflexible. “We had to pay for server resources even when we weren’t using them, and we hit performance limits,” says Markus Peier, IT and Business Process Manager at GRISARD-Gruppe. “Poor performance affected billing and other business processes.”

Move everything to the cloud, starting with SAP

GRISARD had long worked with ITPC AG, a member of the Microsoft Partner network, which it had hired to manage its SAP infrastructure. ITPC together with GRISARD saw the pain points and after a few meetings came up with the suggestion that GRISARD move its SAP servers to [Microsoft Azure](#).

GRISARD already used [Microsoft Office 365](#) cloud-based productivity applications and, to Peier, it made sense to consume SAP from the cloud, too. “The ITPC SAP on Azure solution was what I was looking for—a totally flexible and highly secure cloud-based solution with freedom of choice and lower costs,” says Peier. “It gave us a foundation for growth and a possible future migration from SAP ECC 6 to a different ERP in the future.”

Adds Yves Halbeisen-Orlando, System Engineer at GRISARD-Gruppe, “Neither Markus nor I were concerned about security, because we knew that no local hosting provider could beat the security provided by Microsoft. However, some of our business partners asked Markus if he was crazy! But we proved them wrong. SAP in Azure has been rock solid.”

ITPC orchestrated migration planning and execution, which occurred over a weekend. Today, the GRISARD production versions of SAP ERP Oil & Gas, OGSD, SSR, and SAP Solution Manager run on [Azure](#)

[Virtual Machines](#), [Azure Storage](#), and [Azure Virtual Network](#). SAP runs under the Windows Server operating system and the SAP MaxDB database.

Reduce SAP hosting costs by 40 percent, turbocharge performance

“Since moving to Azure, we’ve reduced our SAP hosting costs by 40 percent,” says Peier. “This is due to consumption-based pricing and to lower fees in general. Lower IT costs help us compete in a price-sensitive market.”

GRISARD has also improved performance. When Microsoft makes new Azure Virtual Machines available, GRISARD can upgrade easily, often gaining more powerful CPUs. “When we hit performance problems, we can resolve them in minutes by upgrading to larger Azure Virtual Machines,” Halbeisen-Orlando says. “We never had that kind of flexibility before. Our monthly billing process used to require a day and a half; in Azure, it takes two hours. This positively affects our cash flow.”

With Azure, GRISARD also has a faster, more reliable network link to mobile devices used by service station employees to access SAP data. Employees previously had to establish a virtual private network connection, which was slow and unreliable, impairing their ability to do things like update gas prices. With a dedicated link to Azure, employees can charge customers the correct price.

Next: IoT and more

GRISARD is busy moving everything it can to Azure. Next to go is the company’s key financial software, Office Wings.

Additionally, GRISARD is working on strategies for the production of intelligent roads using IoT sensors. Smart roads could communicate with smart cars, recharging them as they drive.

“We have exciting ideas to pursue, and many of them will be driven by Azure,” Peier says.

The cloud experts at Single Point of Contact have helped dozens of firms migrate to an Azure platform. Contact us today to learn more about how Azure can help increase security and provide a flexible solution for your companies applications. Get in touch with our [cloud consulting department](#) or call us at 800-791-4300.