



Key Highlights

Business Profile

Axpo is one of the leading Swiss energy companies

Industry

Energy

Challenges

The tape backup system was cumbersome to manage, unreliable, and couldn't meet Axpo's clients' requirements for archiving times and replication.

Solutions

Two DD460 Restorers

Benefits

- **CAPACITY:** Data Domain provides a 20:1 compression rate across all backed up data. With increased capacity, Axpo Informatik achieves client requirements for storing data for up to 30 days.
- **BACKUP SPEED:** Data Domain has reduced backup times for database files to only a few minutes
- **RELIABILITY:** Data Domain continuously performs an integrity check on all data to improve reliability.
- **SIMPLIFIED ADMINISTRATION:** Axpo Informatik reduced administration time by 40 percent.
- **COST SAVINGS:** The division realizes a cost savings by reducing administrative time and licensing fees.

Backup Software

Legato Networker

Pre-Data Domain Architecture

StorageTek tape library

Reseller

Vcare Infosystems AG



Client: Axpo
Industry: Energy
Solution: Two DD460 Restorers

COMPANY

Axpo, based in Baden, Switzerland, has quickly become one of the leading Swiss energy companies. With strong local ties and an international focus, Axpo provides energy and energy-related services to nearly three million people and thousands of businesses in northeastern and central Switzerland. The company focuses on developing its presence in the European energy markets, the Energy Exchanges and the natural gas business.

CUSTOMER CHALLENGES

Axpo Informatik, Axpo's IT services division, runs a centralized data center serving all state Swiss energy providers. As such, it must carefully manage its clients' data and conscientiously plan any changes to the data center infrastructure.

Axpo Informatik previously backed up information to a traditional tape system, but the company's growing data pushed the system to capacity. Adding to the pressure to find a new solution for backup and recovery, clients requested that Axpo Informatik extend archive times from 14 to 30 days and replicate data to a secondary system.

However, adding new tape libraries and drives would have significantly increased the cost of backups – which would not have gone over well with clients.

DATA DOMAIN SOLUTION

Until recently, Nico Hodel, Systems Engineer at Axpo Informatik, found that the rate of innovation among backup technologies didn't keep pace with the increase in data volumes that companies face. Hodel felt that, though new technologies have improved performance, most have done little to improve the backup process.

In evaluating its options, Axpo Informatik considered disk staging, which entails storing backup copies on a secondary system. However, licensing costs ruled out that approach. Likewise, the cost and administrative hassles of virtual tape libraries (VTL) also put that option out of reach.

Vcare Infosystems AG, a Data Domain channel partner, introduced Axpo to Capacity Optimized Storage (COS) from Data Domain.

"I reduced my administration time by 40 percent. The DD460 eliminates all of the mundane tasks I did before."

- Nico Hodel,
Systems Engineer,
Axpo Informatik

With capacity optimization, Data Domain offers high compression rates and reliability, and accelerates backups and restores. In addition to improved performance and simpler administration, Data Domain would allow Axpo to preserve its investment in its existing backup software. Similar to a NAS (Network Attached Storage), Data Domain enables file sharing and looks like a virtual tape drive to the company's backup software.

In tests of the DD400 Restorer, Axpo Informatik saw compression ratios of 44:1 when backing up its SAP database. Those impressive rates, and the success of Data Domain installations with other Vcare Infosystems clients, gave Axpo the confidence to leverage Data Domain for client data.

Currently, the company has a DD460 Restorer, which fits easily in a 19-inch rack, compared to Axpo's tape library that was 14 times that size. With a storage capacity of 3.8 terabytes, the DD460 holds 80 terabytes of compressed data, giving Axpo the capacity it needs for growing data.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Axpo Informatik now has a cost-effective solution for meeting clients' needs. Currently, Data Domain provides a 20:1 compression rate across all backed up data. With increased capacity, Axpo Informatik also achieves client requirements for storing data for up to 30 days. Data Domain has reduced backup times for database files, which now take only a few minutes.

For Hodel, backup has gone from a start-stop operation with tape drives and tape media to a smooth process. Axpo Informatik also has peace of mind in terms of backup reliability.

"Data Domain continuously performs an integrity check on all data," Hodel said. "With tape, we couldn't be assured that there is no data loss."

By moving off of tape, Axpo Informatik has also simplified their administration. The team no longer has to barcode and migrate tapes, set up tape shares or configure retention pools. "I reduced my administration time by 40 percent," Hodel said. "The DD460 eliminates all of the mundane tasks I did before."

Axpo can also easily customize and configure Data Domain based on its requirements. Connecting to the network, defining security settings and creating safe sets only took Hodel less than half a day.

The Data Domain solution also allows the division to satisfy clients' requests for data replication. Axpo Informatik added a second DD460 Restorer that copies data in parallel.

Beyond capacity, reliability and administrative benefits, Data Domain has been a cost-effective alternative to tape libraries and disk staging. By compressing data volume to between five and eight percent of its original size, Data Domain significantly reduces licensing fees for users.

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