



Client
Fuji Oil Europe

Industry
Manufacturing

Requirements

- Ghent-based production facility
- Business-critical systems
- Automated warehouse

Technology needs

- 24x7x365 critical operational uptime
- Mobile endpoint security without need for device management
- Modern & reliable on-prem storage for SAP HANA
- Disaster Recovery in case of emergency
- Monitoring and patching of infrastructure
- Automation and increased efficiency



Fuji Oil Europe upgrades plant with mission-critical storage infrastructure and Prodata managed services

At Fuji Oil Europe, a leading manufacturer of vegetable oils and fats for the food industry, IT has become a business-critical component. A new infrastructure was needed to allow for automation, increase the efficiency of production lines, and guarantee operational continuity. Prodata Systems supported the company by implementing a future-proof HPE SimpliVity hyperconverged infrastructure and providing managed services to ensure 24/7 availability of the plant.

Strategically located at the seaport of Ghent, Fuji Oil Europe has a state-of-the-art plant that produces a wide range of products. The factory is the European production facility of the Japanese Fuji Oil Group. In addition to oils and fats for the food industry, Belgian chocolate is one of its specialties. The products are used by various customers, ranging from small bakeries to big multinationals. The company distinguishes itself thanks to an R&D center that allows for customized production for their customers. Providing the best customer service is therefore an important mission for the company.

Fuji Oil Europe's production is growing rapidly at 10% per year, which is one of the reasons why they focus on digitalization and automation. Their transformation is largely due to the work of Stijn D'Hondt, Accounting, Controlling and ICT manager at Fuji Oil Europe. When he arrived in 2014, IT was not yet extremely important in the plant. "Fuji Oil Europe is known in the market as an innovative and flexible manufacturer, so we needed to expand our IT story. Today, we are quickly gaining ground, both in terms of infrastructure and application development", says Stijn D'Hondt.

Developing a business-critical IT backbone

A look at the production site shows that time has not stood still here. The plant consists of a mixture of older buildings and brand new facilities, such as the fully automated warehouse. Only three people work in this warehouse that is completely self-functional as automatic cranes pack and load crates or containers and then transport them to their destination. Soon Fuji Oil Europe will also open a new facility for white chocolate. As the company enters the Industry 4.0 era, it has integrated its IT systems throughout the entire value chain of manufacturing. This leads to faster production, more efficient processes, and of course increased product quality.

However, automation also creates new and unfamiliar challenges as the IT infrastructure suddenly becomes business-critical. "If the IT systems were to go down, the entire production process would come to a halt. And you don't want the production to be interrupted. Even a single hour of downtime can be extremely costly", says D'Hondt. "That's why we first had to take care of the backbone of our IT infrastructure." To do this, Fuji Oil Europe selected Prodata Systems from two potential partners.

Prodata solutions

- Check Point security (including mobile devices and cloud)
- HPE SimpliVity hyperconverged infrastructure
- 24/7 monitoring & patching through managed services

Prodata Systems services:

- Full Managed Services contract
- 24/7 support
- 24/7 fault & performance monitoring
- Recurrent health check of the environment
- Recurrent maintenance activities to ensure environment is constantly updated with the new releases
- Skilled & certified staff to ensure operational excellence of the datacenter environment
- Dedicated Senior & certified Service Manager to coordinate & ensure optimal Service Delivery
- Dedicated Senior & certified Project Manager available on demand to coordinate all transformation projects within Fuji Oil

Results

- An infrastructure that supports a business-critical environment
- Optimal and fully automated screening & security
- Reliable storage that serves as a powerful IT backbone
- Complete unburdening in terms of monitoring & patching
- Focus on IT challenges that are more valuable to the business



One of the reasons Stijn D'Hondt felt a good match with Prodata Systems is the shared customer-centric approach of both companies. "Because our infrastructure is critical to our business continuity, we placed an emphasis on the support our partner provides. For example, we did not want to be dependent on one person who can suddenly drop out or leave the company. We found that Prodata can offer us that agility. They have experience with large-scale customers, but can still offer a lot of flexibility in their services. We also received positive feedback from other Prodata customers."

Screening for security issues with Check Point

When they decided to upgrade their storage infrastructure, Fuji Oil Europe was already working with Prodata Systems for a mobile endpoint security solution delivered by Checkpoint. "In any business, the biggest risks are the users and mobile devices. We therefore wanted a reliable mobile security solution where we did not have to worry about configuration. Check Point screens everything that goes on in our systems and monitors every application downloaded by our users."

During the pandemic, security became even more important as Fuji Oil Europe switched to Microsoft Office 365. While Microsoft offers a certain level of security, it is still the responsibility of the user to provide additional security layers and a decent backup system. Through the deployment of Check Point, Prodata implemented Zero Trust security for both mobile devices and cloud. Fuji Oil Europe is now quickly notified of any suspicious activity without having to deal with device management.

New storage infrastructure with HPE SimpliVity

To support the plant's digital transformation, Fuji Oil Europe also needed modern and reliable storage. Their previous solution, HPE StoreVirtual VSA, was reaching end of life. At the same time, they wanted to upgrade their SAP software to a new version and implement SAP HANA. Although many SAP customers are moving their workloads to the public cloud, Fuji Oil Europe believes this environment is not stable enough for their mission-critical infrastructure. Prodata Systems therefore helped the company by developing a HPE SimpliVity hyperconverged solution that meets the high demand for redundancy, scalability and agility.

HPE SimpliVity revolutionizes the data center by virtualizing data and assimilating the IT

infrastructure and services under the hypervisor as x86 building blocks. For SAP HANA, Prodata Systems provides a dedicated cluster on traditional servers, set up as dual purpose with SUSE Linux Enterprise for SAP as the operating system. Fuji Oil Europe now has two full-fledged server rooms, with one room running SAP HANA and the other being used for DEV/TEST. In case of an emergency, production is moved from one room to the other, while the DEV/TEST activities are reduced. This allows Fuji Oil Europe to remain operational at all times.

High Availability is the main concern of the new infrastructure. If the entire data center would fail, for example due to a fire or a cyber-related incident, production can be restarted quickly from the Disaster Recovery site. Prodata Systems has a lot of experience with business-critical environments such as Fuji Oil Europe's plant. "The migration went according to plan and production was never disrupted during the implementation process", says Stijn D'Hondt.

Continuous monitoring through managed services

In a next step, Fuji Oil Europe decided to entrust the management of their new infrastructure to Prodata Systems. Because IT has to do more than just keep the lights on, companies find it interesting to outsource their network, storage and security to a dedicated partner. "For Fuji Oil Europe, hiring someone to solve an occasional problem is not scalable. However, these issues do require an immediate response, which is why we included managed services in our long-term contract with Prodata Systems. They have the scalability to monitor our systems 24/7. This allows our own people to focus on strategic IT challenges", D'Hondt explains.

"Now that we have the best hardware and security as a backbone for our IT systems, we can work on new projects that will help our business grow. We have a lot of data and are constantly optimizing our processes. Ultimately, I dream of a data warehouse that consolidates all the data to make smarter decisions, both from an operational and financial perspective. For example, sometimes you need to choose whether it is more profitable to make or buy something. Manually, this calculation requires a lot of work and errors are unavoidable. But if you have sufficient visibility, you can get the information you need at the push of a button. With our new IT infrastructure and Prodata Systems at our side, we have the reliability and services that can enable us to achieve this ambitious vision."

For more info visit our customer cases on www.prodata-systems.be/cases