




PROACT



CASE STUDY

Foto: AZO



AZO.

AZO

Perfectly dosed data security with Backup as a Service and Flash Storage

Summary

Challenge

AZO wanted to develop a new concept for storage, backup and disaster recovery to increase data security, relieve the IT team and reduce costs.

Solution

- Proact Backup as a Service
- Proact project management
- Proact Premium Support 24/7 for hardware
- NetApp AFF A220, FAS2720 for the main location, AFF C190 for the branch offices
- NetApp SnapCenter Backup

Industrial customers around the world rely on AZO systems for the automated dosing of raw materials. However, markets today are volatile, uncertain, complex and ambivalent. Global players like AZO must protect their businesses in the best possible way while remaining highly flexible. With the cloud, a new course has been set.

"If our ERP system were to fail today, nothing would work. Even the high-rack warehouse would be at a standstill without IT. After a few hours, you can send the staff home. Redundancy is enormously important for us. Data security cannot be high enough," says Jörg Märker, Technical Manager IT Infrastructure and Security at AZO.

AZO has been using NetApp ONTAP storage for years, combined with backup and recovery solutions from Commvault and NetApp. Data from the branch offices has long been replicated to the main location in Osterburken, Baden. The scenario is efficient. It centralises data backup and archiving on tape — and that became a problem.

"Robot mechanics, backup success, off-site tape storage — all that was very time-consuming and control-intensive. Moreover, only one backup level was not enough," explains Jörg Märker. "Full backups ran for seven days at last count. Restored data was at least a week old. A complete recovery from tape would have paralysed us for weeks after a total loss."

AZO therefore wanted to redesign data management, modernise the infrastructure and achieve greater security with lower costs and simpler operation.



After the summer holidays, all the resources were already available. Less than four weeks and the new infrastructure was live. It was truly spot-on: the project management and cooperation with the Proact team were excellent."

Jörg Märker,
Technical Manager IT Infrastructure and Security at AZO

The challenge

Proact and AZO have been a well-established team for many years and have repeatedly optimised the infrastructure as well as storage and backup, also with the help of new features and solutions from the manufacturers. But this case was different. AZO wanted to restructure the central and decentralised storage systems and to use new flash technologies. The backup was to be modernised and the effort reduced.

"Apart from infrastructure, applications are our main business, not restoring data and files. We wanted more relief and security as well as the ability to quickly get back to normal operation after a disaster," says Märker..

The goal: More security, but without tape

Commvault as a central management instance was too complex for the team. The licences were too expensive in relation to the functions used. The combination of NetApp and Commvault had to be redefined. Which tool is better suited for what? How high are the costs? What could replace the tape environment? How can the backups be protected against attacks if admin accounts are compromised?

AZO needs a high degree of flexibility in central IT. Decisions that are still pending, such as SAP operation, make long-term planning difficult. Since the lease of the central legacy system was running out, the new storage infrastructure had to be in place within a few weeks.

The solution

From licence costs to future plans, Proact coordinated the use case, technology and financial aspects. Project management was a key success factor. A project manager coordinated all parties involved and processes, from Proact Professional Services and Cloud Teams to hardware procurement and technician deployment for the migration.

"After the summer holidays, all the resources were already available. Less than four weeks and the new infrastructure was live. It was truly spot-on: the project management and cooperation with the Proact team were excellent," says Jörg Märker. The commissioning took place jointly. Proact supported the migration of the CIFS data (files). AZO carried out the migration of the databases and virtual machines independently.

Newly positioned with all-flash

The switch to all-flash storage in the production system provided a performance boost and ended the previous tiering from disk to flash. The CIFS data was excluded and given a dedicated NetApp FAS system.

"With us, you don't get very far with statements like 'that's just how it's done,'" says Jörg Märker. "Packing all workloads into a NetApp cluster as usual would only have meant effort instead of added value for us. We wanted individual systems in a scale-out environment. Proact takes such requests seriously."

AZO branch offices at home and abroad have already been or are still being converted to all-flash systems. The procedure is standardised. Any Proact engineer can roll it out remotely or on site.

Backup as a hybrid concept

Implementing the new NetApp systems was easy. During sizing and backup design, the basic principle, tool use, costs and internet connections were discussed. In the end, there was a hybrid backup concept with three security levels and fully automated processes:

The backup data of the branch offices with their own NetApp systems is stored in Osterburken. The central NetApp system is backed up to a secondary system. Proact Backup as a Service replaced tape and stores all backups in the Proact Hybrid Cloud. Some systems are also backed up to the Proact Hybrid Cloud directly. AZO can monitor the backup but has no admin access and therefore one less point of vulnerability.



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For the first level of security, Proact recommended NetApp Snapshot technology and NetApp SnapCenter. The operation is simple, the know-how is available and, because it is a standard NetApp tool, there are no extra costs for its usage.

Backup as a Service based on Commvault, completely managed by Proact, now only backs up the file systems and controls the backup transfer to the Proact Hybrid Cloud. Since the backup of applications was omitted, the licence costs dropped significantly. In the event of a disaster, recovery takes place via the Commvault solution back to Osterburken..

More efficient with backup tiering

Thanks to Backup as a Service and delta backups, backups at AZO once again take place daily. Backup classes ensure efficient use of the cloud storage. Some data is only backed up to the storage or replicated to the secondary system. The most important data receives level three and is stored in the Proact Hybrid Cloud. In this way, business-critical data has priority in the event of a recovery. Unimportant data, such as such as print servers, can wait.

The same applies to cloud topics: Proact customers can use a solution as defined or have it have it customised. In the event of a disaster, AZO can also run the system directly from the Proact Hybrid Cloud.

The scale-out environment helps AZO plan for six years. After three years, a check is made whether the capacity and performance requirements necessitate further systems and over which runtime. The result is a smooth transition without renewal pressure and dead capital.

"With Proact's help, we have not only put a good solution in place for data security, but IT can now also react with great flexibility to the opportunities and risks of a business future that is difficult to plan," says Jörg Märker. The next topic is the protection of industrial plants, which are becoming more and more digital. The discussion about suitable security concepts is already underway.



More time for application support and IT consulting in customer projects



Uniform backup and disaster recovery strategy



Human risk factor eliminated and more security achieved



Smooth project management from procurement to commissioning



Capital commitment reduced through fluid demand adjustment



Storage growth can now be accurately planned through scale-out investment strategy



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About AZO

AZO provides reliable raw material automation and logistics in production processes in the food, pharmaceutical, cosmetics, chemical and plastics industries. The German company has more than 1,000 employees and 11 locations in Europe, North America and Asia.

About Proact

Proact is Europe's leading specialist in data and information management with focus on cloud services and data centre solutions. We help our customers to store, connect, protect, secure and drive value through their data whilst increasing agility, productivity and efficiency.

We've completed thousands of successful projects around the world, have more than 4,000 customers and currently manage hundreds of petabytes of information in the cloud. We employ over 1,000 people in 15 countries across Europe and North America. Founded in 1994, our parent company, Proact IT Group AB (publ), was listed on Nasdaq Stockholm in 1999 (under the symbol PACT). For further information about Proact's activities please visit us at www.proact.eu.