

“It’s great to know that the people we deal with have a real interest in our business and care about our IT infrastructure. Usually, IT systems and vendors come and go every two or three years. By investing in a tightly integrated end-to-end HDS solution, we have found a reliable partner for the future.”

*Patrick Bichler, Head of Infrastructure,
Corporate IT, SFS Group*



SFS Group Implements Hitachi Data Protection Suite to Back Up, Restore and Rapidly Recover Mission-Critical Business Applications

Challenge: Keep global manufacturing and sales operations running smoothly, around the clock.

Solution: Implement data protection solution to back up, restore and rapidly recover mission-critical business applications.

Outcome: Fully automated backups ensure systems are protected in the event of disaster while assistant and scripting reduces management time by 20%.

The Challenge

SFS Group manufactures mechanical fastening systems and precision-formed components. Headquartered in Heerbrugg, Switzerland, SFS Group operates 70 sales offices and manufacturing sites across Europe, North America and Asia. The company employs 8,300 people worldwide, generating annual sales of CHF 1.37 billion (US\$1.39 billion).

Building on its domestic and international success, SFS Group has grown through acquisition, which has put a strain on the company’s IT.

“Integrating diverse IT systems and processes into our existing landscape was a huge challenge, particularly as we already had a diverse infrastructure in place,” explains SFS Group’s Head of Infrastructure, Corporate IT, Patrick Bichler. “To keep global operations running

smoothly, it’s critical that production sites and sales offices around the world all use the same systems.” It was essential not to just add more components and solutions, but also to get rid of the “zoo” of solutions, he adds.

The drive for harmonization formed part of a general renovation of the whole data center infrastructure project. SFS Group recognized the importance of having standard backup and recovery processes that work for the entire company: for all subsidiaries and at all locations.

Bichler comments: “We rely on our 20 mission-critical SAP applications running around the clock. If our core business applications were to go down unexpectedly, the impact would be huge. We wanted to be able to restore data from our SAP applications as quickly as possible, to ensure business continuity.”



SFS Group AG

INDUSTRY

Manufacturing and Retail

SOLUTIONS

Data Protection, Converged

HARDWARE

Hitachi Compute Blade, Hitachi NAS Platform, Hitachi Unified Compute Platform, Hitachi Unified Storage

SOFTWARE

Hitachi Data Protection Suite, powered by Commvault

SERVICES

Provided by Hitachi TrueNorth Partner Swisscom

Outcomes

- Ensures mission-critical applications are fully backed up.
- Reduces management time by 20%.
- Fast SAP recovery: granular and full.

The Solution

To standardize IT across the company, SFS Group decided to replace its existing infrastructure, including backup and recovery solutions, with HDS technology.

Bichler recalls: "We asked several vendors and system integrators to draft a renewal of our data center infrastructure. The HDS offering was by far the most attractive."

Working with the Swisscom, Commvault and HDS teams, SFS Group implemented a closely integrated Hitachi Unified Compute Platform solution, deployed with Hitachi Data Protection Suite (HDPS), powered by Commvault, as its one-stop shop for backup and recovery. "Previously, we used IBM® and NetApp technologies for data protection," says Bichler. "With HDPS, we gained a single solution that delivers all the capabilities we need, enabling us to harmonize processes across the company."

SFS Group now uses HDPS to back up the 700 virtual and dedicated application servers supporting its SAP applications, as well as its IBM Domino® and Notes® environment, to protect email communication. The company runs multiple backups daily, capturing frequent snapshots of its SAP environment to minimize recovery time. Today, individual SAP system backups take just four minutes on average, reducing SFS Group's total backup time to one hour.

The Outcome

Using HDPS technologies, SFS Group centralized backup and recovery management, ensuring that critical business applications are fully protected. Bichler elaborates: "Instead of having to monitor different administration consoles, we now have a single tool, enabling us to spend 20% less time on data protection management.

"What's more, we've been able to fully automate backup policies using HDPS, so we no longer need to worry about scheduling

or running backup jobs, even when deploying new systems from scratch. Previously, we had to manually configure each server backup individually, whereas now there is zero-effort backup configuration for new virtual servers. Crucially, we know that our SAP applications are being backed up regularly and securely, and that we can recover quickly in the event of disaster, boosting business continuity."

SFS Group is also utilizing the HDPS IntelliSnap functionality, for application-aware storage-based snapshots of underlying Hitachi systems, to guarantee very low recovery point and time objectives (RPO and RTO) in the event of operational failure.

Bichler comments: "We have demanding recovery time objectives, and in the event of disaster we must be able to restore any SAP system within one hour. With the HDPS solution, we can recover even our mission-critical databases in just eight minutes using the IntelliSnap snapshot revert feature. We're delighted with the fast, granular and full SAP recovery the HDPS provides, which we can copy over at up to 380MB per second. The 'point and click' ease of use is a big change for us. Despite using snapshots, it used to take hours to recover SAP: Now it takes just minutes."

The HDPS backup policies include archiving and data retention periods, helping SFS Group comply with data protection regulations, without adding administrative workload.

SFS Group also benefits from having a standardized infrastructure in place. "A single-vendor environment has made life much simpler," notes Bichler. "We have a single support number to ring and HDS is always there to help.

"We have established a true partnership with HDS, Swisscom and Commvault. It's great to know that the people we deal with have a real interest in our business and care

about our IT infrastructure. Usually, IT systems and vendors come and go every two or three years. By investing in a tightly integrated end-to-end HDS solution, we have found a reliable partner for the future."

To read more about SFS Group's UCP solution, please [click here](#).

Swisscom

Swisscom is Switzerland's leading telecom company and one of its leading IT companies. Headquartered in Ittigen, Swisscom's international activities are concentrated mainly in Italy, where its subsidiary Fastweb is one of the biggest broadband providers. With around 21,200 employees, Swisscom is one of the most sustainable companies in Switzerland and Europe.

Commvault

Commvault is a leading provider of data protection and information management solutions. With solutions and services delivered directly and through a worldwide network of partners and service providers, Commvault solutions compose one of the industry's leading portfolios in data protection and recovery, cloud, virtualization, archive, and file sync and share. commvault.com.

About HDS

Digital transformation improves enterprises' cost-efficiency, time to market, customer experience, and revenue through better data management. Hitachi Data Systems uses data to power the digital enterprise. HDS.com.

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