



Next step to the hybrid cloud

Future Cloud Infrastructure for flexible
SAP basis operation convinces Continental

“The private cloud is a compelling option for us for operating our SAP systems. It combines stability and cost efficiency. The migration to a next-generation private cloud was logical and T-Systems provided us with the best support in all phases as an end-to-end provider.”

Christian Eigler, Corporate CIO Continental AG

Founded in 1871, Continental AG from Hanover is one of Germany's largest multinational companies. The automotive supplier is a DAX 30-listed company. With over 190,000 employees at 561 locations in 58 countries, the company generated sales of just under €34 billion in 2021.

In 2022, Continental AG was split into three independent group sectors: Automotive, Tires, and ContiTech. The group sectors comprise 16 business areas. Automotive develops and produces electronically controlled chassis and safety systems. The Automotive group sector is the company's largest business segment and offers solutions for driving safety, drive, and comfort. The tire business is bundled in the Tires group sector. ContiTech manufactures other rubber and plastic products for industrial applications, such as hoses, conveyor belts, vibration and sealing systems. Continental AG also grew through acquisitions in the 2000s. Integrated companies or company units included Phoenix AG (2004), Motorola's automotive electronics business (2006), Matador (2007), and Veyance Technologies Inc. (2015).

Continental AG uses SAP to manage its enterprise processes. The company operates one of the world's largest SAP landscapes with over 450 SAP systems. The landscape that has grown over time is extremely complex.

Uninterrupted availability to support international business is therefore vital for the automotive supplier. Continental chose T-Systems as its partner for operating the SAP landscapes.

At a glance

- Search for a future-proof SAP operating platform
- Leveraging of cost reduction potential
- Facilitation of hybrid scenarios
- Absolute operating stability
- T-Systems as long-term SAP operating partner
- Migration to next-generation private cloud: Future Cloud Infrastructure
- End-to-end service
- High level of automation
- Increased scalability and flexibility
- Cost reduction
- Basis for system consolidation and S/4HANA transformation
- Optional: operation of non-SAP systems
- Establishment of hybrid concepts (Azure)

Reference in detail

The challenge

SAP production systems have hitherto been operated on a classic on-premises infrastructure – with a perfect record: With its operating services, T-Systems has provided Continental with high operating stability and reliable availability of the SAP services for many years. Yet the established private cloud technology was becoming outdated.

Continental was looking for a new operating concept, which, on the one hand, replicates the existing stability, but also offers greater flexibility, increased scalability, and more convenient use of SAP. At the same time, the various company units should be able to integrate their own preferred platforms to pave the way for hybrid working, for instance with Azure. It was particularly important for Continental that the new operating concept or the used platforms offer maximum cost efficiency. In particular, the continuous operation of the production systems should be as cost-effective as possible. It was also important for Continental to outsource all services end-to-end to a single provider. In this way, Continental receives a competent contact for all SAP issues.

The solution

With the switch to the Future Cloud Infrastructure (FCI), those responsible at Continental decided to retain a private cloud, which also supports hybrid cloud usage, as the pivotal point for SAP operation over the long term. The Future Cloud Infrastructure is a next-generation private cloud. It opens up many functions that users and operating teams are familiar with from the public cloud. These functions include comprehensive automation of regular workflows that allow complete application stacks, for instance, to be provided in less than three hours or make possible seamless resource scaling by a factor of 80. At the same time, the FCI paves the way for integrating public cloud resources, such as for developing and testing new applications.

To use the FCI, T-Systems sets up a landing zone on the shared private cloud platform in the Frankfurt data-center cluster. The VMware basis for both platforms, the old and the new, also simplifies the migration. Three migration steps are envisaged through 2024 where T-Systems will minimize the downtimes. After these steps, T-Systems will operate the SAP landscape entirely on the FCI platform.

Customer benefits

Continental has a partner at its side with T-Systems that delivers end-to-end expertise for all SAP questions: From the infrastructure, platform operation through to application support. Numerous analyst reports have singled out over many years T-Systems' expertise in private cloud and SAP. Retaining the underlying platform technology based on VMware makes the migration much easier.

Sophisticated migration procedures reduce downtimes and, in turn, costs for the migration. Substantial cost reductions thanks to the FCI platform and its efficient management are another advantage when continuously operating the production SAP systems. In addition, SAP operation on the flexible and scalable FCI opens up further opportunities for Continental going forward. These include operating non-SAP systems, some of which work together very closely with the SAP systems, and the introduction of hybrid scenarios (by incorporating public clouds such as Azure). With the new platform, Continental also gains a sound basis for the upcoming transformation to SAP S/4HANA and possible consolidation projects within the group.

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