

ABV runs core business application on  
HP Integrity Platform



“Thanks to HP, we have a solution that combines leading-edge technology, fantastic performance, and excellent support services. HP’s people worked very hard to build the best possible solution for our needs.”  
Wolfgang Grech, head of IT, Allgemeine Bausparkasse

**ABV** *Bausparen*  
Partnerschaft, die *Gewinn bringt.*





Allgemeine Bausparkasse (ABV) is Austria's fourth largest building society, with a market share of 11 per cent. It manages more than 600,000 contracts with a total value exceeding €8.7 billion. ABV does not offer its services directly to the public, but relies instead on a network of some 4,000 independent consultants and brokers, together with numerous partners in the credit services and insurance sectors.

ABV operates in a saturated market. In Austria, more than 60 per cent of the population have building society contracts. Competitive success therefore depends on the ability to retain existing customers and win new ones from rival societies. This in turn dictates a focus on customer service as well as a constant emphasis on internal efficiency.

Back in 1999, a move from fixed to variable rates for loans led ABV to implement a new core business application. This resulted in the supplement of the company's 15 year old mainframe with a new Sun database server. However, the specific performance demands of the core application, coupled with a more

general need for improved processing capabilities and greater storage capacity, meant that this server and the host itself had to be replaced now.

"Our old Sun server couldn't adequately support our core application and our enterprise database," commented Wolfgang Grech, head of IT. "Furthermore, it didn't offer sufficient flexibility to accommodate the variable workload associated with our business."

#### **Flexible platform**

For ABV, it was therefore imperative to identify a flexible, high-performance platform for the core business, including both servers and storage systems. This platform had to be both cost-effective and scalable. ABV hoped to identify an architecture having plenty of scope for expansion and for accommodating new technological developments without prompting yet another platform replacement.

Standard benchmarks were used to evaluate server offerings from HP, IBM and Sun. The HP Integrity rx8620 server, incorporating the Itanium II processor, produced the best results.

## Customer at a glance:

Industry sector: Financial services  
Name: Allgemeine Bausparkasse (ABV)  
Headquarters: Vienna, Austria  
Founded: 1929  
Telephone: +43 1 31380  
Number of employees: 300  
URL: [www.abv.at](http://www.abv.at)

## Why HP?

- Market-leading performance
- Future-proofed technology
- Virtual partitioning



“Although the Itanium architecture was at the beginning of its lifecycle, the HP Integrity rx8620 clearly outperformed the competition,” said Grech.

HP Consulting & Integration (C&I) assumed responsibility for setting up and installing the solution in collaboration with ABV. HP also provided some training. At the core of the new infrastructure is a single HP Integrity rx8620 server with 16 CPUs. This system, supplied by HP Business Critical Systems (BCS), acts mainly as a database, and a little as an application server. For backup, there is a two-way HP Integrity rx2600 server. HP Networked Storage Solutions (NSS) provided a storage area network (SAN) solution based on an HP StorageWorks Enterprise Virtual Array (EVA) 5000, with 8Tb storage capacity, and two HP StorageWorks MSL6060 tape libraries. Close co-operation between HP and ABV ensured that the implementation was completed on time and within budget.

#### **Fantastic performance**

ABV has become the first Austrian financial services company to run its core business

application on the Integrity platform. According to Grech, this platform has proved to be both stable and robust. The most striking benefit is a major increase in processing speeds.

“We were aiming for at least a four-fold increase in performance, but in many situations processing is now eight to ten times faster than before. In the past, it would take us three days to complete our end-of-year accounts, but now they are done overnight,” said Grech.

The gains in processing speed translate into better service for partners and customers, a key success factor for ABV, even though it does not deal directly with the end-user customer. Thanks to the HP solution, even the most complex queries from brokers and consultants about their customers’ contracts can be answered within moments.

Cost is another area where the HP solution excels. Although ABV had already made major savings on maintenance costs by replacing its mainframe, it hoped that the switch from Sun to HP Integrity would reduce

## Hardware

- HP Integrity rx8620 server (16 CPUs)
- HP Integrity rx2600 server (2 CPUs)
- HP StorageWorks Enterprise Virtual Array (EVA) 5000
- 2 x HP StorageWorks MSL6060 tape library

## Software

- Core business application developed in-house
- Storage Area Manager

## HP Services

- Consultancy
- Installation
- Education
- Support



costs by an additional 35 per cent. According to Grech, this target was quickly met. System administration has become much easier, thanks mainly to the HP Integrity server's integrated Storage Area Manager software, which enables resources to be allocated simply by dragging and dropping.

In the longer term, because the rx8620 is based on standardised components and

designed to accommodate future developments easily, total cost of ownership (TCO) will be exceptionally low.

Finally, the flexibility of the server and storage architecture enables change to be accommodated smoothly and rapidly. According to Grech, ABV's business is highly seasonal in nature, with December being a particularly busy month. In the face of this

kind of variability, a rigid system architecture does not represent an optimal solution.

"Thanks to HP, we have a solution that combines leading-edge technology, fantastic performance, and excellent support services. HP's people worked very hard to build the best possible solution for our needs," concluded Grech.

## Challenge

- Ensure competitive success by focusing on customer service and internal efficiency.
- Implement new platform for core business application, offering superior performance and flexibility.
- Meet more general need for improved processing speeds and greater storage capacity.

## Solution

- Base architecture on HP Integrity rx8620 server with 16 CPUs, acting as a database and application server.
- Engage HP Services to provide consultancy, implementation, training and support services.
- Implement storage area network (SAN) solution based on a HP StorageWorks Enterprise Virtual Array (EVA) 5000 and two HP StorageWorks MSL6060 tape libraries.

## Results

- Performance has increased by up to ten times.
- End-year accounts can be prepared overnight compared to three days using the previous systems.
- Customer service is improved because queries can be answered within moments.
- Maintenance costs are 35 per cent lower.
- System administration is more straightforward.
- Total cost of ownership is low because future developments can be accommodated easily.
- The flexible architecture supports rapid adjustment to seasonal and other changes in the business.

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