An investment that pays for itself

In reply to the question of whether the investment had been worth it, CEO Marc Schmid answers: «Absolutely! The systems are faster, more flexible, and we can use the language module we want for each country as well as take care of special requirements. New features can be added quickly without any problem. And last but not least, the infrastructure as good as pays for itself. We have been operational for half a year now, and based on the first results, we expect to have recouped our investment within two years. This is all the more important because the flower market is not expanding: in this business, you can only hold your ground through efficiency.»

Customer at a glance

industry sector: Retail
name: Fleurop-Interflora EBC AG
headquarters: Zürich
telephone: +41 1 874 25 25
www.fleurop.com; www.interflora.com

You can find further information about the advantages Hewlett-Packard can offer your company from your local HP partner or at: www.hp.com or http://welcome.hp.com/country/us/eng/prodserv/storage.html

Fleurop-Interflora:
closer to the customer
with more flexibility
thanks to HP.

Fleurop-Interflora has been the European flower delivery market leader for 76 years. In 1946 the then European Fleurop-Interflora company joined up with Interflora (FTDA) British Unit Ltd. and the American FTD Florist Transworld Delivery group to become an international organization: Interflora Inc., in order to guarantee worldwide delivery of fresh flowers. The European umbrella organization Fleurop-Interflora

EBC AG is based in Zurich. For the past three years this group has been responsible for handling international orders and payments from 17 indepen-dent country organizations (license holders) as well as from several hundred directly affiliated florists in over 40 additional countries. The Fleurop-Interflora group is a private company with an annual turnover of half a billion CHF.

hp network storage
solutions

hp network storage
solutions

E-business bloomed

In order to keep up with changing market requirements, the European Fleurop-Interflora group developed two websites: www.fleurop.com and www.interflora.com. That this was a far-sighted decision was quickly evident: within three years the number of online orders rose from 15,000 to 152,000. Orders can be placed through both websites, the Call-Center, or directly at a florist. The handling of all international orders from license holders – an impressive total of 622,000 annually – takes place today on the system of the Swiss organization.
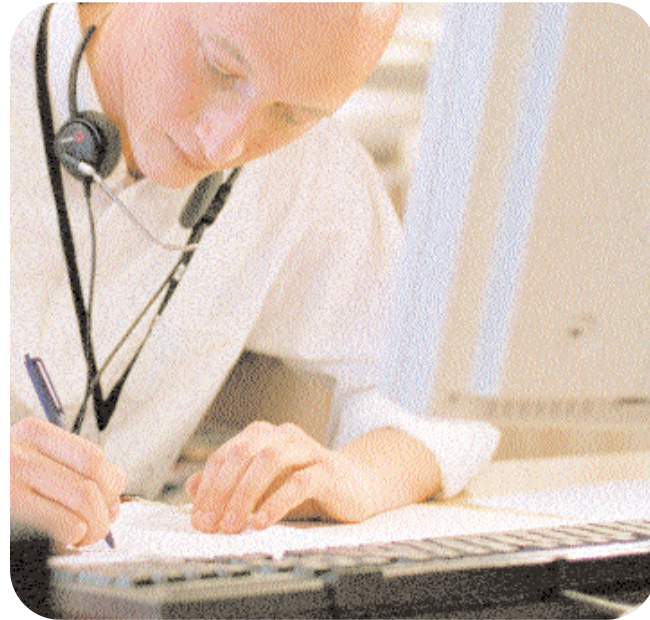
Local adaptability is crucial

Until the beginning of 2002, all transactions ran via the service center and software solution of the US organization. According to CEO Marc Schmid, this was a situation that had to be changed, above all because of ownership issues and limited opportunities to develop the system further: «The technology was out of date and clearly built for Americans. So there was no way to use umlauts – not to mention Cyrillic or Scandinavian symbols. In addition, facilities for automatic clearing for all orders were limited and local requirements could not be met in full.»
The ability to regionalize is an absolute must for the flower shops and country organizations of the Fleurop-

«The systems are faster, more flexible. We have been operational for half a year now, and based on the first results, we expect to have recouped our investment within two years..»

Marc Schmid
CEO Fleurop Interflora EBC AG

Interflora group. Flower prices – as well as local holidays and currencies – must be adjustable for each country. The company's in-house Customer Relationship Management software supports these facilities. Marc Schmid comments: «What good is it for a client to write a note for the birthday of a family member or an employee if we can't even spell their name correctly?»

Needed: a high-capacity in-house solution with growth potential

The problem was clear: a modern IT infrastructure was needed to replace the old system in order to meet expanding requirements. «It was important to me,» adds Marc Schmid, «that our group had its own high-capacity IT infrastructure. Outsourcing was out of the question since we work with a database we developed ourselves as well as our own software. Putting out the system would be far too complicated.» Marc Schmid was looking for an IT platform for the group on which not only the entire international order traffic could be handled, but also the clearing of all international transactions as well as orders from florists and country organizations in different countries. In addition, the system had to be capable of keeping pace with company's development – since the Swiss organization is also increasingly responsible for the IT development of the whole Fleurop-Interflora group.

StorageWorks MSA1000

SAN offers a secure, flexible IT infrastructure with maximal availability

HP was far from unknown to Fleurop-Interflora. Through its partner company Visual Design in Biel, HP had already been asked for support in the past, which had allowed it to gather valuable experience of the Fleurop-Interflora environment. The new solution had to offer on the one hand, a secure storage environment for Fleurop-Interflora's enormous database; and on the other, it needed a flexible environment that could grow with the requirements of the company. Maximal availability of the solution was an absolute must, since a system failure has the gravest consequences in this business: if orders are delivered incorrectly, late or even not at all, most clients will seek out a new partner for their flower deliveries.
HP proposed a SAN (Storage Area Network) solution, through which the databases of the e-business shops and the database for the handling of affiliated florists and country organizations were linked in clustered ProLiant servers (Microsoft cluster). This allows both easy extension of the system, as well as flexible deployment of the various servers. Management was simplified through the use of a Virtual Replicator, and maximal availability guaranteed through a redundant MSA 1000 (modular SAN array): if one server goes down, the other can directly take over operations. HP suggested its ProLiant DL 380 model for the web server.

Fast and efficient installation

Mark Doyle, responsible for IT at Fleurop-Interflora AG, notes: «The proposal impressed us from the start. HP assisted to ensure a quick and trouble free installation of the system.» Hardware installation was completed in a few days. In order to reduce the risks involved in moving the American IT environment to the new infrastructure, migration took place in stages. The operation for 22 countries was completed within two months.

Task
Installation of a scaleable, high availability local environment for data management for Fleurop-Interflora AG.
Solution
Storage Area Network with MSA1000 and Microsoft cluster. Host-based storage virtualization for optimized storage management.
Hardware and Services
1 MSA1000 (fully redundant)
2 ProLiant DL 580 G2, 2 ProLiant DL 380 G2
2 Virtual Replicator,
2 external 2Gb SAN switches
Installation service (7 days)
Service contract for 3 years
(CarePaq, 7 x 24, 4h)