



CASE STUDY

Comprehensive Data Management Refresh at Westfleisch

Enterprise Multi-Site Data Protection and Virtualisation Efficiency

Executive Summary

Westfleisch, headquartered in Münster Germany, relies on resilient and high performance information technology to manage its business. However, their data backup systems were tape-based, outmoded and slow. Data recovery could take hours and would cause costly product spoilage. With guidance from BLUE Consult GmbH, they chose Actifio as a comprehensive solution to modernise their data management, improve business resiliency and gain enterprise-scale data protection. As a result, Westfleisch today have minimised their backup windows and gained instant data recovery, while controlling data growth and cost across nine production sites.

Company Overview

Established in 1928 as a German cooperative, Westfleisch today is one of the leading meat marketers across 30 European countries. Westfleisch operates nine production sites and works with 4,000 farmer partners. The business group headquarter with 5,000 employees is located in Münster, Westphalia.



Key Facts

WHO: Westfleisch, a leading meat marketer with nine European production sites.

CHALLENGES: IT complexity, speed –RPO/RTO 4–8 hrs., cost, data growth, intra-site data exchange and backup to tape.

IT ENVIRONMENT: IBM Storage, TSM DB2/SAP clusters, VMware, Windows, Huawei servers, Private Cloud, Physical and Virtual systems.

SOLUTION: Two Actifio CDS in the primary data center. Actifio Sky at seven remote locations for backup, DR, replication, deduplication, development and test. RPO/ RTO reduced to ½ hr.

SAVINGS: Eliminated the potential for significant product loss caused by system shutdowns.

The Challenge

Westfleisch business operations relies on comprehensive IT systems to provide continuous high performance information exchange among nine production sites, multiple field offices and thousands of farmer/co-contractors. Updated data protection infrastructure was seriously needed to improve RTO and RPO performance and efficiency at corporate headquarters and subsidiaries.

Backup, high availability and data recovery capabilities all needed modernisation. Long data restore times, using IBM Tivoli Storage Manager (TSM) for traditional data backup, were impacting timely application access. Multiple point tools added complexity and system recovery times were well over an hour. At the time Westfleisch were unable to meet RPO requirements, remote site replication and disaster recovery were limited by outmoded architecture.

The foundation of Westfleisch's business success and reputation is freshness. If system failures cause a production line to stop, quality and freshness would be impacted. Any delay of an hour or more would result in all product in process to be discarded at a significant loss. A new approach to systems and infrastructure was required to improve Westfleisch's operations, extend its virtualisation capabilities, streamline backup and provide a flexible, reliable, platform for future expansion.

“Although we operate in a handcraft business, powerful IT systems are indispensable for Westfleisch and have a great impact on our success against competition. As a modern company we must be good and efficient in our core business as well as in our use and management of data.”

—JENS ALEX
HEAD OF GROUP IT AT WESTFLEISCH

Examining Options

With the expertise of BLUE Consult GmbH, Westfleisch defined their key requirements for upgraded Service Protection and Subsidiary data management systems. Westfleisch were looking for simple administration, a fast and reliable disaster recovery capability and investment protection. The new solution needed to restore systems in less than 1/2 hour. It had to sync DB2 and write suspend across protected systems within seconds. In addition the new systems had

to be flexible, energy efficient and blend easily with existing operations. As a holistic data management solution, Actifio solves these backup and DR problems.

“We eliminated multiple backup and replication tools and replaced all of their time, cost, and complexity with Actifio's simplicity,” said Friedhelm Wittwer, Head of Infrastructure Management at Westfleisch. “Actifio provides us a self-service platform we can leverage for multiple clients while supporting various unique business and service level requirements.”

“In the process of defining requirements, it became clear how data virtualisation could significantly assist Westfleisch in improving efficiency and flexibility and help to optimise application processes for SAP, Big Data and the entry into DevOps.”

—ROGER BUCHTA
MANAGING DIRECTOR AT BLUE CONSULT

A proof-of-concept plan was created that would test copies of production data using Actifio's snapshot, deduplication and mount features. This process would have originally required multiple dedicated protection solutions on separate physical systems on their legacy infrastructure. The successful outcome proved Actifio's value in the simple integration of SLAs, using incremental data acquisition directly from production applications. The test demonstrated extreme ease-of-use for multiple requirements as well as flexibility specifically in responding to individual adjustments through the API.

The Solution

Westfleisch was quickly convinced of the clear business benefits to be gained from Actifio in both ROI and TCO. All of the initial desired functions could be fully served and additional application scenarios of value were already emerging. For example, Westfleisch could now create a single golden master copy and quickly access consistent copies of DB2 databases, which had previously suffered from time consuming delays, and additional cost for storage. BLUE Consult GmbH and Actifio collaborated to create scripts that automate precise snapshot timings, and Blue Consult added scripts to compensate VM-network settings related inflexibilities that arise from copying Linux VMs. All was accomplished simply, with less storage infrastructure, less software, fewer licenses, and no timing problems for backup and recovery windows.

Two Actifio CDS appliances were installed in the primary Westfleisch data center to handle both physical and virtual systems. Where the company was previously limited in performance and synchronicity by restoring from tapes, Actifio Sky, for the first time, now enables Westfleisch to have enterprise scale backup for each of their seven remote sites, and replicates data to one of the appliances at the primary site. A storage-growth explosion has been averted and the system is designed for growth so that new sites can easily be added.

The Actifio platform has satisfied the requirements for security, recoverability, RTO, and RPO. It has changed and expanded Westfleisch's traditional approach to data management. It also covers all the functions needed for backup service and disaster recovery in a single integrated solution. One single simple, integrated platform now manages backup, snapshot, restore, disaster recovery, business continuity, replication, deduplication, compression, encryption and WAN optimisation. It is the management of virtualised data, decoupled from infrastructure, comparable with server and network virtualisation.

“The customer is really happy with the result. We relieved their technical constraints, lowered their administration cost, helped to reduce their risk of financial loss in production and provided additional value for DevOps. They're very happy.”

—RENE ANGENHEISTER,
SYSTEM ARCHITECT AT BLUE CONSULT

Immediate Benefits:

- System recovery times reduced to ½ hour, down from 4–8 hours
- Management defined SLAs can be achieved
- Recovery speed has eliminated the risk for significant financial losses, by discarding spoiled products, due to system outages in production

- Network infrastructure costs down 70% and production performance improved.
- Cost of copy data management reduced.
- The Blue Consult and Actifio collaboration has expanded the existing setup to become a fast, safe protection solution for Westfleisch's SAP environment.
- Westfleisch have reduced their hardware, software and maintenance licenses previously needed for separate inefficient legacy backup systems, and have gained a holistic copy data management solution based on Actifio snaps, deduplication, replication and bandwidth optimisation, all in a single product.
- Data silos have shrunk while Actifio provides control over data access and the amount of copy data that is being created.
- Westfleisch is now in control of their storage costs, with far less needed to support data backup and archives.
- An effective potential for the implementation of DevOps has been enabled, by Actifio's virtual test-data provisioning.

What's Next?

With less worry of data protection failures, Westfleisch IT staff are now free to focus on new initiatives.

“At first we were curious about data virtualisation. Then, during our project planning, we recognised the possibilities to operate our entire business more effectively.”

— JENS ALEX,
HEAD OF GROUP IT AT WESTFLEISCH