Automic Keeps IT Operations Cool at GEA Refrigeration Technologies

GEA Refrigeration Technologies is a market leader in the field of industrial refrigeration technology. The company develops, manufactures, and installs innovative key components and technical solutions for its customers. To ensure complete customer satisfaction, GEA Refrigeration Technologies also offers a broad range of maintenance and other services. Its product range comprises the following core components: reciprocating and screw compressors, vales, chillers, ice generators, and freezing systems. As part of the GEA Group, GEA Refrigeration Technologies is comprised of more than 40 locations with over 3,000 employees.

IT Operations are centralized, with GEA Refrigeration IT Services responsible for maintaining and improving the production services that support the business activities of all locations within the company. MS Dynamics AX (formerly known as Axapta) is used to standardize manufacturing, sales, warehouse management, CRM, finance & administration, project management, robotic automation and other business processes across the organization.

Business Services Cannot Wait for IT Operations

With Dynamics AX requiring significant backend processing, one of the biggest challenges GEA Refrigeration Technologies faced was checking if jobs generating finance reports required by end-users each morning had run properly. Information contained in these reports was needed first thing every day to reconcile accounting sub ledgers. Making sure these reports were delivered on time was one of many responsibilities that IT Services needed to perform.

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> IT consultant, GEA Refrigeration IT Services

BUSINESS CHALLENGES
- Deliver end-user reports on time
- Support 50 business locations
- Manual intervention
- Manage MS Dynamics AX jobs

AUTOMIC SOLUTION
- Assured report delivery
- Savings of 1 FTE
- Reduced recovery times
- Increased end user availability

CUSTOMER BENEFITS
- MS Dynamics AX integration
- Ease of Use
- Error handling
- Event driven scheduling

possible to perform manual checks and rely on human intervention to manage Dynamics AX processing. However, as the number of locations increased and there was increased use of Dynamics AX functionality, issues such as jobs not running and jobs not completing on time weren't easy to spot. IT Services could no longer rely on manual checking if it was going to deliver the Dynamics AX platform business operations relied upon.

Stephan Kouwenberg, IT consultant at GEA Refrigeration IT Services, takes up the story: "Checking the running of one set of reports takes about 15 minutes a day. When we had two locations it was practical to do this manually. When you have 50 locations you have an issue. We needed to scale our MS Dynamics AX environment to serve our business environment. That's when we decided to automate the batch processing monitoring and get control of managing our IT systems instead of having our end-users call us up when there are problems."

MS Dynamics AX Integration a Key Requirement

Recognizing the value of having a centralized dashboard from which they could manage all batch workload, GEA Refrigeration Technologies prioritized their requirements for a workload automation solution. Top of the list was being able to connect with MS Dynamics AX. An intuitive user interface that offered a simple, unified overview from where they could monitor and check the performance was also very important. A product that was easy to configure and maintain would speed ROI as well as ensure low operational costs.

Working with a consulting partner, GEA Refrigeration IT Services analyzed the workload automation market and, following a customer visit that featured a product demonstration, selected Automic Dollar Universe. "80% of our need was to address report distribution issues. Functionality, stability and easy restarts were all useful things to have but not vital. After seeing the demo and hearing the experiences of the customer we were really impressed by the possibilities Automic Dollar Universe offered," commented Kouwenberg.

Automic Solution

Once they had received basic training, GEA Refrigeration IT Services undertook the Automic Dollar Universe implementation without any Automic help. The ease to deployment, the user interface and a centralized view has enabled IT Services to set itself the goal of automating all IT workload with Automic Dollar Universe. In addition to scheduling critical reporting jobs, file transfers and interfaces between external applications and Dynamics AX have been automated with direct business benefits; for instance, ensuring dispatch documents are generated at the right time for trucks leaving warehouses.

"Automic Dollar Universe does what we were promised. This is not always the case with products. With Dynamics you have to check everything manually. We have managed to automate these checks with Automic Dollar Universe. It helps us prevent problems and we are much quicker solving problems we still have to deal with," said Kouwenberg.
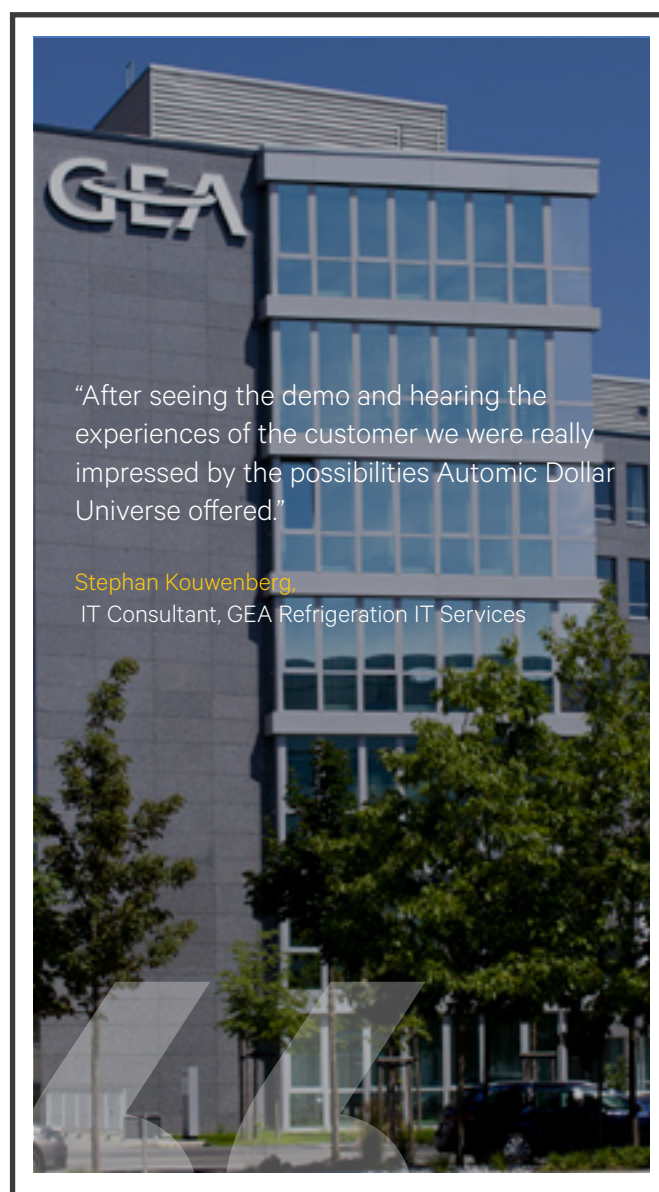
Pushing the Dynamics AX Envelope

Implementing Automic Dollar Universe has increased the value that GEA Refrigeration Technologies is getting out of MS Dynamics AX. Servicing its customers in the field means that GEA Refrigeration Technologies needs to instruct engineers with work orders. They also need to make sure clients are charged for the hours engineers spend fixing problems aswell as for the parts they have fitted. With Automic Dollar Universe automating the processing of data from external systems, engineers get information on upcoming jobs while GEA Refrigeration Technologies can send out customer invoices as soon as a job is finished – meaning GEA Refrigeration Technologies gets paid sooner.

GEA Refrigeration IT Services Value

"Without Automic Dollar Universe we could not guarantee that jobs would run OK. With Automic Dollar Universe we can guarantee our users that jobs run in a proper way," adds Gerrit Zwartjes, technical specialist at GEA Refrigeration IT Services.

"The Automic Dollar Universe dashboard shows us all activity for all of our servers including Dynamics, Windows and SQL jobs. This way we are able to monitor and configure all workload automation from one console. Management receives the reports they need on time and the IT department receives alerts in case an issue arises", said Zwartjes. "We have managed to increase availability of our services to end users with Automic Dollar Universe."

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For more information or product demonstration please visit www.automic.com