



DekaMarkt

Citrix Application Delivery
for Retail

“December is a very busy month for our stores and we cannot risk downtime. With Citrix Provisioning Server it takes minutes instead of hours or even days to add new servers to the Citrix Presentation Server farm.”

Eduard van Amstel
IT Architect, Detailresult
Services/DekaMarkt

Key benefits

- Dynamically supports corporate growth
- Ensures server-to-server consistency with a single workload image
- Improves server scalability and management
- Accelerates disaster recovery and business continuity

DekaMarkt is ready for growth using Citrix Provisioning Server for Datacenters

DekaMarkt is a supermarket chain with more than 85 stores and two large distribution centers. DekaMarkt has about 8,000 employees and is headquartered in Velsen-Noord, the Netherlands. In early 2006, DekaMarkt joined forces with another grocery store chain, the Dirk van den Broek Companies, to start Detailresult Services, a shared services center that provides separate IT administration and personnel support services for both chains, which combined have more than 450 stores and 20,000 employees.

The Challenge: Preparing for a dynamic supermarket business

The supermarket industry in the Netherlands is very volatile, with chain consolidation on the increase. The IT infrastructure at DekaMarkt was not ready to support rapid expansion. The PCs in the stores were five years old and running local applications as well as browser-based applications for point of sale. Adding or upgrading applications was difficult and took too much time because of the need for IT administrators to visit the local stores and offices.

“We needed an IT solution that was flexible enough to support management decisions such as store takeovers, and the ability to immediately create capacity when needed,” said Eduard van Amstel, IT architect at Detailresult Services. “The last thing we want is a new store that is not connected to the back office for a period of time. Adding stores should be a really fast and easily reproducible process.”

Implementing a Citrix Application Delivery Infrastructure solution

The decision to implement Citrix Presentation Server™ was a first logical step and immediately made sense. Designing a blueprint for the new architecture took a few months. **IT Oost Nederland BV**, a Gold Citrix® Solution Advisor, suggested Citrix Provisioning Server™ for Datacenters to ensure identical server workload images and included it in the blueprint of the new architecture at DekaMarkt.

After the first pilot in five stores showed how easy it was to make changes to a new ordering administration application for managing stock, the rollout moved rapidly. Within six weeks, all 85 stores and offices at DekaMarkt got thin clients to replace the local PC infrastructure.

Now, 550 thin clients run fully virtualized desktops hosted on Citrix Presentation Server. Local discs in these centralized servers are used for caching only, and the operating system image is booted from a storage area network (SAN) using Citrix Provisioning Server for Datacenters. Provisioning Server streams the server workloads, containing Microsoft® Windows Server® 2003, Presentation Server and the applications, to seven HP servers. Then Presentation Server delivers the applications to end users.

Supporting growth and expansion with a dynamic datacenter

Citrix Presentation Server and Citrix Provisioning Server enable a dynamic IT infrastructure where adding workloads to support a growing organization is fast and flexible. IT is streamlined and much easier to manage because all application configurations, including Web plug-ins for Web-based applications, are centralized and delivered to the desktops.

DekaMarkt is not only growing through takeovers, but is also adding new concepts such as wine stores and even garden centers to expand the organization. Amstel said, "Now, all it takes — from an IT perspective — is adding thin clients to the local network at the store and scaling up the server farm in the datacenter by adding workloads with Citrix Provisioning Server. Previously, growth meant visiting all stores to install PCs or add applications with a software distribution tool. By using Citrix solutions, we actually moved the desktop to the datacenter."

Simplifying business continuity

Citrix Provisioning Server has also improved the speed of recovery from a business interruption at DekaMarkt. This was proven recently, when an application behaved unreliably just before the feast of St. Nicholas and Christmas. "December is a very busy month for our stores and we cannot risk downtime. We ordered additional servers, just as a precaution. These new servers were running in the farm within four days — which included the complete process from ordering the systems at our reseller to unpacking, physically installing, testing and provisioning them. Citrix Provisioning Server enables us to add new systems to the farm by just booting servers from the network using centralized images that contain the operating system as well as all applications and Citrix Presentation Server. Now it takes minutes instead of hours or even days to add new servers to the Citrix Presentation Server farm."

Server-to-server consistency

Even a very small difference between servers can impact performance or reliability. "Citrix Provisioning Server makes sure that all servers in the farm are absolutely identical, as the provisioned image is the same for all servers and includes all applications," said van Amstel.

He concluded, "Citrix Provisioning Server brings us the flexibility in system administration we were looking for. It also makes it very easy to outsource the daily system administration of our servers. And if something does go wrong, all it takes is a server rollback — a reboot and provisioning of the previous image from the SAN to the server."

Future plans

In the future, DetailResult will extend the Citrix solution implemented at DekaMarkt to the Dirk van den Broek companies.

About the Citrix Solution

Citrix Presentation Server™ is the de facto standard for delivering Windows® applications at the lowest cost—to any user, anywhere. It offers both application virtualization and application streaming delivery methods to enable the best access experience for any user, with any device, working over any network. Citrix Provisioning Server™ enables IT organizations to dynamically stream datacenter and desktop operating systems and workloads to both virtual and physical machines from a central location. Provisioning Server enables more agile and cost-effective delivery of applications and desktops, and provides an ideal complement to the Citrix XenServer™ virtualization products.

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Networking environment

- Citrix Presentation Server™ running on seven HP DL380 servers
- Citrix Provisioning Server™ for Datacenters
- Microsoft® Windows Server® 2003
- IGEL thin clients

Applications delivered

- Microsoft® Office
- Microsoft® Internet Explorer®
- Numerous in-house-developed Web-enabled applications

