



kika and Leiner Migrate Data and Applications in Record Speed with VMware HCX

kika and Leiner is an Austrian furniture store chain based in St. Pölten. Since the opening of the first store, 18 Leiner and 32 kika furniture stores have opened in the Austrian market and the company employs around 7,700 people. kika and Leiner are part of the Austrian SIGNA Group and has a turnover of 1.265 billion euros.

Industry

Retail

Partner

Axians ICT Austria GmbH is part of the VINCI Energies global brand network for ICT solutions. The Axians network comprises 12,500 specialists in 27 countries worldwide.

VMware footprint

- VMware® vSphere®
- VMware HCX®

One of the largest furniture stores in Austria, kika and Leiner, faced the decommissioning of its existing data center, complete data migration, and relocation to a new data center—all in just one weekend during ongoing operations. VMware HCX, provided via partner Axians ICT Austria, made this possible by serving as the platform for application and data migration. Within 36 hours, Axians ICT Austria and VMware solutions ensured smooth data migration, continuous data security, and full maintenance of processes for providing furniture to customers. In this way, kika and Leiner saved valuable resources, time and costs while establishing a future-proof IT infrastructure for the company to strengthen operations and flexibly adapt to market challenges in the future.

On the road to success with cash and carry

Herbert Koch opened the first kika furniture store in Vienna in 1973 with the innovative “cash and carry” self-service principle. Since then, kika and Leiner has developed into a full-service furniture provider with a wide range of products and services in all price segments. Since the first store’s inception, a further 18 Leiner and 32 kika furniture stores have opened in the Austrian market and the company now employs around 7,700 people. Together with the Leiner Group furniture stores they are part of the Austrian SIGNA Group and has a turnover of 1.265 billion euros.

“The Axians migration project with VMware HCX 4.2 proved that even complex, particularly time-critical migration processes can run absolutely smoothly.”

Gabriele Schwarz, Head of IT and Organization, kika and Leiner



Data center structure rebuilt in one weekend

Structures in data centers should be regularly reviewed and questioned. This is especially true for companies like kika and Leiner that are continuously growing, opening in new markets and connecting to IT infrastructure since this increases the complexity and the administrative effort.

“Controlling the growing IT infrastructure in a data center is becoming increasingly difficult. Private cloud, hybrid cloud and container workloads can hardly be managed,” says Gabriele Schwarz, head of IT and organization at kika and Leiner.

Moreover, infrastructure becomes increasingly vulnerable over time and risks from external influences rise. Companies are challenged to reduce costs and provide the most flexible applications possible that meet business and end user requirements for agility, stability, and performance as well as availability.

kika and Leiner faced an additional, very acute challenge. Due to a strategic reorientation, the company wanted to move out of its previous data center building. In order to not disrupt the operations of the branches, the move had to be feasible within 36 hours, thus during ongoing operations. At first, kika and Leiner had to decide whether to move to a new, in-house data center or to outsource the data center environment and have it provided by professional services. kika and Leiner had one weekend to set up an entire data center structure anew without any impact on customers and business processes.

Successful migration to VMware environment

kika and Leiner quickly decided on an outsourcing contract

with its VMware Verified Cloud Services Partner Axians ICT. As a result, the entire application functionality was transferred to the Axians data center, where Axians now operates the systems for kika and Leiner. The decisive factor for the outsourcing decision was kika and Leiner already used VMware solutions, and the Axians data center was also running entirely based on VMware. Products such as VMware vSphere were already perfectly integrated into the data center. Based on the VMware Cloud Services Provider Program flexible “pay as you grow” licensing model, it was obvious for kika and Leiner and Axians to also use a VMware tool for the migration for cost and efficiency reasons.

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The VMware workload migration tool, VMware HCX, proved to be a decisive feature for successful migration.

It synchronizes all virtual machines securely and reliably over a large geographical distance between two locations. This meant that the systems at kika and Leiner can continue to run, and a copy can be replicated at Axians in parallel before the existing kika and Leiner servers shut down. In addition, a disaster recovery program was deployed across two sites to ensure the reliability of the business systems. VMware HCX also enables the time required for the migration to be estimated in advance—a huge advantage for kika and Leiner given the short-term nature of the project. The migration process of almost 200 virtual machines with VMware HCX took place in less than 36 hours, and after a short interruption for the reboot, the machines continued to run seamlessly at Axians.

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Gabriele Schwarz, Head of IT and Organization, kika and Leiner

Secure data migration with app mobility and hybrid infrastructure

VMware HCX provides secure and seamless app mobility and hybrid infrastructure, both on-premises and in the cloud, precisely meeting kika and Leiner requirements for the planned migration. VMware HCX abstracts the individual private or public VMware vSphere resources



VMware HCX Interconnect can then provide high-performance, secure and optimized multi-site connectivity to achieve hybrid infrastructure and present multiple options for bidirectional virtual machine mobility with technologies that facilitate legacy data center modernization.

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kika and Leiner now has nearly 200 VMs between two cities in Austria, over 60 miles apart, synchronized. The company has access to managed services through partner Axians to optimize the use of its own resources, providing cost savings, fast, predictable data migration, and risk-free digital server migration.

Future-proof set-up

With VMware HCX, kika and Leiner now has a modern infrastructure shared with Axians. This future-proof IT environment enables the company to react quickly and securely to changing market requirements or other external influences. Especially nowadays, when more and more digital-first companies are entering the market, kika and Leiner can stand out against competitors and offer their customers new services thanks to optimal use of resources.

VMware HCX proved to be highly resilient and an ideal fit for the Axians virtualization deck, which is largely built on VMware infrastructure. The migration project of kika and Leiner proved that even complex, particularly time-critical migration processes can run absolutely smoothly. Axians will continue to provide the VMware infrastructure to kika and Leiner in the future.