How a cloud-only strategy supports OSRAM Continental in developing the automotive lighting of the future

OSRAM Continental develops innovative automotive lighting systems to meet the needs of modern mobility concepts. Launched in 2018, the joint venture very quickly set up an entirely new, ready-to-run IT infrastructure based on VMware Cloud on AWS. Thanks to a virtual desktop infrastructure, the company benefits from time and cost savings, maximum flexibility and centralized management, thus creating the infrastructural prerequisites to meet the requirements of an industry in transition.

A symbiosis of core competencies: OSRAM and Continental combine their expertise

The joint venture OSRAM Continental, which has been founded in July 2018 unites the expertise and experience of two global leading technology companies in the automotive sector. The combination of OSRAM’s expertise in lighting technology and Continental’s expertise in electronics and sensor technology sets new standards for unique driving and product experiences. By combining light, electronics and software, OSRAM Continental creates intelligent solutions for better visibility, more efficiency and functionality, design and individuality and communication with other road users. The joint venture with headquarters in Munich employs around 1,500 people at 13 locations worldwide.
the employees were able to start on Day 1 with virtual desktops and uniform applications such as VMware Workspace ONE, VMware Horizon and VMware Cloud on AWS.

“We chose VMware Cloud on AWS because of its high availability, speed and flexibility. Furthermore, it is also a highly-efficient and cost-effective solution,” explains Mathias Meyerburg, Managing Director of vleet GmbH. “Another important factor was that a single vendor is able to supply everything we need – within a very short amount of time.” An entire data center, for example, can be set up in just three to four hours. “This completely new set-up not only enabled a very fast implementation within the cloud data center, but also allowed us to introduce new tools for our developers,” Michael Schöberl adds. As a result, OSRAM Continental was able to move the software development department, which was crucial for the company, to a new, uniform process landscape without interruptions.

With the integrated platform for digital workplaces VMware Workspace ONE as well as VMware Horizon and VMware Cloud on AWS, employees can access corporate data from any device and from any place worldwide with consistent stability and performance. “The cost/benefit ratio absolutely convinced us. It is way more efficient to run all solutions consistently via VMware Cloud on AWS,” Michael Schöberl notes. “In addition to this consideration, a search for local suppliers as well as the establishment of an own data center within each region would have been far too cost- and time-consuming.”

Cost-benefit efficiency: Speed and global flexibility with cloud and VDI

VMware Cloud on AWS allows OSRAM Continental to stay flexible and digitally connected worldwide while maintaining a sustainable IT infrastructure. “We can now scale our systems on demand,” says Michael Schöberl. “That kind of flexibility makes it possible for us to provide extra workloads on an ad-hoc basis, which leaves us well prepared for any challenge.”

The cloud technology has proven itself: OSRAM Continental has already successfully virtualized critical applications. “Apart from the production-related systems at our factories, every application here runs in the cloud,” Michael Schöberl states. “Now we are planning to migrate our production facilities too.”

Avoiding extra costs, minimizing risks: Global IT from a single source

Only six months passed between the announcement of the joint venture and the start of operation (Day 1). Within this period the IT infrastructure for the joint venture had to be set up. “It was a greenfield project when we started in early 2018,” Michael Schöberl recalls. “The entire organization and process landscape had to be established until the summer of 2018.” For this OSRAM Continental needed a reliable partner. Thanks to the outstanding collaboration with the virtualization specialists of the vleet GmbH, ...
Cloud on AWS, maintenance no longer is an issue and does not need to be taken care of. In addition, AWS data centres are designed to be energy efficient and environmentally friendly, thus improving the ecological footprint. Furthermore, fewer hosts lead to a lower energy consumption.

“Our primary goal is to provide the employees with a digital workplace that is safe and easy to use,” Michael Schöberl explains. “When needed, we are able to provide additional 400 desktops at one go.” Especially during the CoVID-19 pandemic, the system has proven itself. Job interviews and employee onboarding in India have been carried out remotely, as well as the roll-out of laptops in Shanghai. “In a regular environment this would have been unimaginable.” Employees remain motivated and productive, as they can work flexibly and independently from any device and any location. At the same time, administration can be reduced due to a central management which reduces the workload of the IT team.

Where does the journey lead to?

The next steps will be the integration of CloudHealth by VMware and the migration of critical production applications to the cloud. That will eliminate the administrative workload at the individual sites. In the USA, this migration step is planned before the end of the year. China should follow in April 2021. “Digitalization is gaining ground in the major factories, and we will see this trend continue,” Michael Schöberl predicts. “In addition, trending topics, such as projections in and outside of the vehicle require huge volumes of data, so efficient IT systems are needed to manage that data in real time. Here too, the Public Cloud will help us. It is the driver for the global infrastructure of OSRAM Continental.”