



## Media agency MindShare uses Intel® Xeon™ processor-based IBM eServer xSeries\* for building a high-performance IT infrastructure on Oracle9i\* Database with Real Application Clusters (RAC)

### SOLUTION SUMMARY

**Challenge:** MindShare GmbH & Co KG is a leading media agency with customers like Ford, Kraft Foods, IBM, Lufthansa and Unilever. The company consults its clients and takes on the complete workflow – from planning the advertising and purchasing advertising times, up to the final invoice – and for that uses customised software that must be based on a hardware infrastructure which is flexible and reliable, so that MindShare immediately can react to changes in the media market. In addition, the hardware must be able to execute demanding applications in a business critical environment. The former applications failed to meet requirements for flexibility, high performance and high availability.

**Solution:** MindShare implemented (deployed) two scalable, robust IBM® eServer xSeries\* solutions based on IBM Enterprise X-Architecture\* technology with Intel® Xeon™ processors featuring Hyper-Threading Technology running SuSe Linux\* Enterprise Server 7 and Oracle9i\* Database with Real Application Clusters (RAC). The Oracle database contains customer account data, invoicing and business planning. The implementation – from the very first customer contact until the final installation – took place in just ten weeks.

**Business Value:** As a result of implementing the new solution Mindshare can now react faster to changes in the media market. Since the database contains booking and accounting data the booking and cancellation of advertisements can be sent to the broadcasting stations in a very easy way. The new solution delivers a stable, secure and powerful IT infrastructure, which is used as a base system and backbone of business critical applications. The company benefits from an increased number of automatic processes like internal planning, evaluation of media data and accounting processes, which contributes to heightened productivity. By integrating the new solution the whole workflow in the agency could be improved. The servers are placed in two different parts of the building, in case of a fire MindShare is able to recover the data in a short period of time.

**Hardware:** 2 database-servers IBM x440, 2 x Intel Xeon processors MP with Intel NetBurst® microarchitecture and Hyper-Threading Technology.

**Software:** SuSe Linux SLES V7 operating system Oracle9i database with Oracle Real Application Clusters (RAC) DAP MediaLine\*

**SAN:** 2 x IBM 2109 SAN Fibre Channel Switches (model F16).

**Storage:** 2 x IBM FASTT700\* storage servers and a total of four EXP700 Storage Expansion units with 2 TB of storage capacity installed. The FASTT storage server can be expanded to scale up to 32 TB of fibre channel storage

## Business Challenge

Hardly a line of business is as fast-moving as the media industry. Almost daily new periodicals are published; other newspapers are discontinued or their content is rearranged. The television area is particularly extreme. Broadcasting times are exchanged; broadcasting companies compete with new television programs to contact more spectators. Readers and viewers profit from these changes; the program variety gets greater. For enterprises wanting to develop advertising, however, this scenario is a nightmare. They frequently must decide which medium is best suited for their product.

Recording and evaluation the media data requires a great deal of effort. The challenge consists in storing the advertising prices and in knowing exactly the target group of a medium. Data must be coordinated frequently, a task which a single enterprise cannot manage. So specialists are needed who know the media market in detail and can help the enterprises to place their advertising optimally. One of these specialists is MindShare.

MindShare is a leading media agency that acts as an agent between its clients and media companies. Founded in 1998 through the merger of the media operations of J. Walter Thompson and Ogilvy & Mather, MindShare is part of the WPP Group network of over 60 communications companies. MindShare is represented in 53 countries with 73 offices and has 3,500 employees worldwide. Along with their 160 representatives in Germany, MindShare counts Ford, Kraft Foods, IBM, Lufthansa and Unilever on their list of customers. It is the task of the media agency to combine information from many different sources to generate a profitable advantage for their customers. The company records advertising rates for print media, commercial prices for radio and TV spots, and manages the addresses of broadcast companies and publishing houses. They manages the booked advertising times. In addition, MindShare takes on the complete workflow from planning the advertising and purchasing advertising times, up to the final invoice.

## LOOKING FOR A STRONG IT INFRASTRUCTURE

The enterprise has set itself a high objective: to always be one step ahead of its competitors and always use the latest developments in hardware and software to stay at the top of worldwide media agencies. As a base for this success, they use an ingenious database system. This system helps the employees of MindShare to recognise changes in the behaviour of spectators watching television programs and to develop modeling approaches, so that their customers can obtain a high return on investment. The software requires a robust infrastructure that can deliver accurate up-to-date information. The software must run on a hardware infrastructure which is flexible and reliable so that MindShare can immediately react to changes in the media market. In addition, the hardware must be able to execute demanding applications in a business critical environment so that extensive statistics can be provided to the customers without delay.

MindShare was using self-made applications for internal planning and accounting processes. These applications failed to meet requirements for flexibility, high performance and high availability, so the company decided to re-engineer the company's business processes. Before a new application framework could be implemented, however, MindShare needed to lay down a new hardware infrastructure. The company was looking for a cost-effective storage and server infrastructure powerful and available enough to run its mission critical applications. Since the company used Intel® processor-based servers for their first solution without any problems, they were already familiar with using and managing them. MindShare's goal was to find an Intel based solution that would lead to faster response times when evaluating the comprehensive media data. In case of a disaster the new solution has to make sure that no data is lost and MindShare can continue its business in a short period of time.

**“The co-operation between Intel, IBM and Oracle was exemplary. We can recommend this combination very much.”**

**Stefan Oetken,**  
Project Manager  
MindShare

**Business Solution**

Deciding against new Sun and EMC hardware because of the high costs of a RISC-based solution, MindShare instead implemented two scalable, robust IBM eServer xSeries\* 440 Intel processor-based servers on IBM Enterprise X-Architecture\* technology. They also choose an Oracle9i\* Database with Real Application Clusters (RAC) to store all the customer's account data, invoicing and business planning. This customer information is critical, so the servers form an important foundation for MindShare.

**GOOD EXPERIENCES WITH INTEL PROCESSOR-BASED SERVERS**

"We have recognised that we cannot stand out with faster invoices against the competition. We have therefore looked for a reliable, efficient and flexible base system so that we can concentrate on our own ideas," said Stefan Oetken, project manager at MindShare. MindShare already had experience with Intel processor-based IBM servers running Linux\* and Oracle databases. Oetken says: "The decision-making process started very early. Since our previous Intel processor-based system ran without problems for two years, the decision in favour of Intel processor-based servers was particularly easy."

The Intel processor-based systems offer a first-class price/performance ratio. RISC-based servers would have blown up our financial frame at the configuration used. The Intel® Xeon™ processors MP with

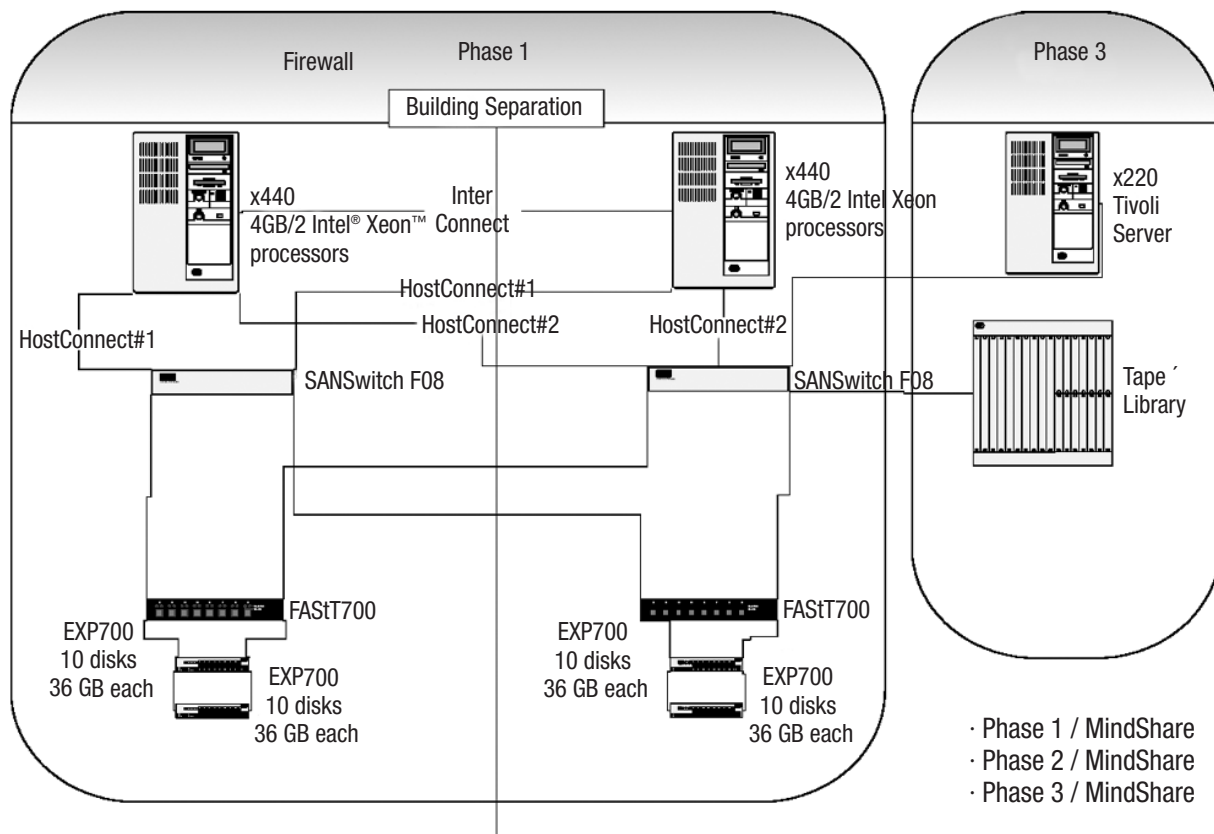
Hyper-Threading Technology fulfilled all specifications and load tests with bravado. "For us it was important to get a cost-effective and certified system. The Intel Xeon processors in IBM servers exactly meet these requirements," Oetken said.

**INTEL XEON PROCESSOR-BASED IBM xSeries SERVERS CAN FULLY CONVINC**

The servers are part of a SAN environment built on two IBM 2109 SAN Fibre Channel Switches. The switches connect the IBM xSeries servers to two IBM FAST700 storage servers and a total of four IBM EXP700 Storage Expansion units, with 2 TB of storage capacity installed. The archive and current backup files are stored on the second FAST server. The servers are placed in two different parts of the building. In case of a disaster the company can easily recover to the latest point in time without loss of any information. The performance of the new system is very convincing: the customer benefits from an increased number of automatic processes, which contributes to heightened productivity.

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MindShare



## RECOMMENDED: CO-OPERATION OF INTEL, IBM AND ORACLE

Oetken particularly speaks with praise about the co-operation of the companies involved. Due to the complexity of the configuration, the installation and implementation had to be performed through close teamwork between Intel, IBM, Oracle and SuSe. As a result, the implementation – from the very first customer contact until the final installation – took place in just ten weeks. States Oetken: “The co-operation between Intel, IBM and Oracle was exemplary; we can recommend this combination very much.”

## HYPER-THREADING TECHNOLOGY AS BACKBONE OF OPTIMISED WORKFLOW

The Intel Xeon processor-based IBM xSeries 440 servers with Hyper-Threading Technology provide the backbone for MindShare’s new applications and optimised workflow. MindShare soon will be able to transfer demanding applications, like the creation of statistics, to the newly installed systems. For the customers, the combination of IBM xSeries 440 servers powered by Intel Xeon processors MP, Linux operating system, and the approved Oracle database technology in a SAN means a cost-effective, scalable, flexible and available solution, which holds the promise of future server and storage consolidation.

### More Information

[www.mindshareworld.com](http://www.mindshareworld.com)  
[www.ibm.com](http://www.ibm.com)  
[www.oracle.com](http://www.oracle.com)  
[www.intel.com/go/oracle](http://www.intel.com/go/oracle)

*Solution provided by  
IBM, ORACLE, eServer, Enterprise X-Architecture technology*

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Intel® Xeon™ processors deliver a flexible and efficient platform as the backbone of optimised workflow in enterprise environments. The Intel Xeon processor powers the most demanding applications in business critical environments
- First-class price/performance ratio. By using IBM xSeries\* servers powered by the Intel Xeon processor the company saves a lot of money compared to RISC-based servers with a similar configuration
- Invest in standards. IBM xSeries servers with Intel processors running on standard operating systems like Linux together with powerful database systems like Oracle9i\* Database with Real Application Clusters (RAC), deliver a reliable, available and flexible platform in business critical computing



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