

“The Hitachi solution for Microsoft Private Cloud has opened up an entirely new emerging market. We can thereby meet the strong demand for flexible, cost-efficient cloud services today.”

*Dietmar Hensch, Managing Director
Kramer & Crew GmbH & Co. KG*



Kramer & Crew Sees Client Satisfaction Soar to the Clouds With Hitachi Solution

Challenge: Meet growing client demand for flexible, cost-effective cloud services.

Solution: Implement a unified infrastructure with Microsoft® Azure® Pack to support cloud computing.

Outcome: The company can deliver cutting-edge cloud services, satisfying existing clients and attracting new business, particularly in highly regulated industries, such as banking and financial services.

The Challenge

Kramer & Crew, founded by Uwe Kramer in 1992, is an owner-operated IT company with headquarters in Cologne and seven branch offices located throughout Germany. Its customers include both global players and Mittelstand companies (small and medium-sized businesses), and organizations from various industries.

As IT directors of digital transformation, Kramer & Crew assumes responsibility for managing complex IT projects. At the same time, this IT company also provides unique expertise in service management. All of its CrewServices are “Made in Germany” and performed by Kramer & Crew.

Its portfolio includes both converged and hyperconverged structures, classical infrastructures and virtualized environments.

And its highly experienced staff specializes in storage, server and desktop virtualization, fully integrated data management, well-thought-out Citrix and Microsoft solutions and strategies for application lifecycle management and enterprise mobility.

Kramer & Crew has always been at the forefront of innovation, and recognized that the rise in popularity of cloud computing signaled a huge business opportunity for the company. Managing Director at Kramer & Crew, Dietmar Hensch elaborates: “Over the last two to three years, cloud services have exploded in popularity. More and more businesses are choosing to move their IT into the cloud to cut costs, while also increasing operational flexibility and scalability.

“But the public cloud isn’t for everybody,” he continues. “We know from experience

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INDUSTRY
IT Services

SOLUTIONS
Storage, Private Cloud

HARDWARE
Hitachi Virtual Storage Platform G series
Hitachi Compute Blade 500

SOFTWARE
Hitachi Storage Virtualization Operating System with global-active device feature

Outcomes

- Meets strong client demand for cloud services.
- Ensures that clients can stay compliant with strict data protection regulations.
- Enables innovation of service offerings that attract new clients.

that many businesses would be unwilling or unable to adopt public cloud services for data protection reasons. With this in mind, we wanted to offer our clients all the benefits of the public cloud, without the risks and limitations.”

Kramer & Crew made a strategic decision to develop a new range of cutting-edge private and hybrid cloud services that would meet the needs of clients who can't or won't move their data into a public cloud. The company sought a reliable, easy-to-implement infrastructure solution to deliver these new services. Kramer & Crew thereby created a new market wherein selected middle-class companies have the chance to participate in the new digitalization wave as well while becoming new customers.

When transitioning from infrastructure to hybrid cloud, Kramer & Crew faces both the challenge and the chance to achieve a new level of excellence in service intelligence and individuality. The company therefore seeks to fulfill modern service level compliances while guaranteeing continuity in service contacts.

The Solution

To support the company's move to transform its business and adapt to new client demands, Kramer & Crew turned to long-term technology partner Hitachi Data Systems for advice.

Hensch recalls: “Having worked with HDS for over 10 years, we have a great relationship with the local team here in Germany. So when HDS suggested implementing a converged infrastructure to support our cloud computing initiatives, we knew that we could rely on their counsel.”

He adds: “What's more, we knew from experience that HDS technology is ahead of the game in terms of performance and scalability. It was important to us to invest in the best possible infrastructure, as we were just starting to establish true cloud services as a new line of business and further address a new market with that approach – from enterprise to middle-class cloud.”

Working closely with the HDS team, Kramer & Crew implemented a unified solution consisting of Hitachi Virtual Storage Platform G series and Hitachi Compute Blade 500 to deliver Infrastructure as a service (IaaS) for their Microsoft® ecosystem. The solution is fully equipped to support Microsoft Hyper-V® virtualization software. Kramer & Crew took advantage of this compact solution to set up a complete private cloud platform that runs Microsoft Windows Azure® Pack on Hitachi systems and allows clients to consume IaaS.

“The Hitachi solution enables us to offer our clients the flexibility they need,” says Hensch. “Thanks to Hitachi, we can provide sophisticated, fully automated private cloud services from our Crew DataCenter. As a result, we can offer new capabilities to our clients, regardless of whether they want to keep their data in a private hosted environment or move it into the public cloud. With that approach, Kramer & Crew creates a new and unique market, within which customers can enjoy state-of-the-art technology paired with bullet-proof data legislation and security.”

The intelligent and individual CrewServices that complement the hybrid cloud solution package creates a unique transition experience for customers migrating to a new digital infrastructure. At the same time, Kramer & Crew guarantees continuity in service contacts and thereby combines state-of-the-art technology with established personal networks.

The Outcome

With the Hitachi solution in place, Kramer & Crew can offer its clients attractive, on-demand CrewCloud Services in line with their business needs. This enables customers to go forward in digitalization.

Hensch remarks: “The Hitachi solution gives us the flexibility to provide the highly available and scalable IT services we need to win new clients and grow our business in the crowded and highly competitive cloud services market.

Operating an advanced cloud platform close to our clients enables us to deliver services that meet each client's individual requirements.

“In particular, the ability to offer market-leading Microsoft Azure cloud services from our German Crew DataCenter via the Hitachi solution is ideal for clients in highly regulated industries, such as banking and financial services. They can adopt our cloud technologies and be safe in the knowledge that they are fully complying with national data protection regulations. This gives us a significant competitive edge over global public cloud providers,” he explains.

“As well as meeting demand from existing clients, Kramer & Crew has also seen an increase in new clients who are keen to take advantage of its CrewCloud Services. “We're moving more and more systems to the cloud each month,” notes Hensch. “Cloud is a major business driver right now, and we only expect the number of new clients to keep on growing.

“That's why we're now working with Hitachi to extend our successful private cloud to a second Crew DataCenter. Besides increasing capacity, this will enable us to provide better business continuity from two independent and fully redundant locations in Germany.”

Hensch concludes: “The Hitachi solution for Microsoft Private Cloud has opened up entirely new opportunities for Kramer & Crew. Today, we can meet the strong demand for flexible, cost-efficient CrewCloud Services, keeping existing clients satisfied and attracting new business in new segments at the same time.”

About HDS

Digital transformation improves enterprises' cost-efficiency, time to market, customer experience, and revenue through better data management. Hitachi Data Systems uses data to power the digital enterprise. HDS.com.

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