



Braathe Gruppen takes the stress out of IT with flexible cloud services



Braathe Gruppen prides itself on delivering 'worry-free' IT solutions that take all the stress out of technology for its clients. Founded in 1989, the company offers a comprehensive range of IT solutions, from fully managed services to cloud computing. Braathe Gruppen is headquartered in Rygge, Norway.

Answering calls for the cloud

In recent years, demand for cloud computing has skyrocketed. As more and more businesses choose to move their data, their applications and even their infrastructure to the cloud, how can service providers like Braathe Gruppen keep up? And how can they keep service levels high?

Håkon Svendsen, CTO at Braathe Gruppen, takes up the story: "Our services have been cloud-focused for many years now, but we've seen a huge increase in demand recently. Not only do we need to support a growing number of clients, we also need to meet changing expectations. Today, clients want to store ever more data in the cloud, and access that data faster."

In the past, Braathe Gruppen relied on a proprietary SAN system to underpin its cloud services. To keep pace with client interest in the cloud, the company recognized the

Overview

To keep service levels high as demand for cloud computing continues to rise, IT services provider Braathe Gruppen replaced its traditional storage area network (SAN) system with cutting-edge software-defined storage technology. The solution is based on Microsoft Windows Server with Hyper-V and Storage Spaces Direct (S2D) running on Lenovo System x3650 M5 servers, equipped with powerful Intel® Xeon® E5 processors and Intel S3710 high-endurance SSDs.

The Lenovo Engineered Cloud Solution operates as a scalable, high-performance hyperconverged cloud, enabling Braathe Gruppen to deliver services with stability and resiliency while simplifying infrastructure provisioning and maintenance.

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CTO,
Braathe Gruppen



need for a more flexible data storage solution to support its business systems, including Visma ERP and Microsoft Dynamics solutions.

Håkon Svendsen remarks: “Our SAN solution was fast reaching full capacity, so we took the opportunity to look at alternatives. We wanted to step out of the traditional costly licensing model and simplify our hosting infrastructure, as well as improve scalability and performance.”

Shaking up storage

After discussing its technical requirements with Lenovo, Braathe Gruppen decided to implement a software-defined storage solution based on Lenovo servers and Microsoft Storage Spaces Direct S2D technology.

Håkon Svendsen recalls: “The fact that the Lenovo platform has been validated by Microsoft was a big deciding factor. And after running a proof of concept, we knew that the end-to-end, pre-configured Lenovo-Microsoft solution was the right fit for us.”

Working with Lenovo, Braathe Gruppen initially implemented four Lenovo System x3650 M5 servers as a single Lenovo Cloud Configuration for Microsoft S2D cluster. The Lenovo servers, powered by the Intel® Xeon® E5 processor family, offer high levels of performance – delivering approximately 800,000 input/output operations per second (IOPS) for read-only operations.



Close-up of Lenovo System x3650 M5 server. Photo credit: Braathe Gruppen.

The company is currently in the process of deploying an additional cluster, made up of eight Lenovo System x3650 M5 servers. Pre-loaded with Microsoft S2D software, the Lenovo servers will provide Braathe Gruppen with an easily-scalable storage repository to support client services.

Solution components

Hardware

Lenovo System x3650 M5 with Intel®

Xeon® E5 processor family

Lenovo RackSwitch G8272

Software

Microsoft Windows Server 2016 with

Hyper-V and Storage Spaces Direct

Microsoft System Center 2016

Microsoft Dynamics

Visma ERP



Boosting scalability and performance, while saving a bundle of money

With the Lenovo S2D clusters in place, Braathe Gruppen has gained a flexible and cost-effective hyperconverged solution – ideal for meeting ever-increasing demand for cloud services.

Microsoft S2D enables the company to build and scale new storage environments quickly and easily, while the Lenovo hardware delivers the performance, high availability, and stability it needs to keep services running smoothly.

“The throughput is very impressive,” says Håkon Svendsen. “Where previously we’d see performance levels of around 20,000 IOPS with our traditional SAN, we now benefit from an average of 200,000 IOPS – a fantastic improvement.

“You don’t usually get such high levels of performance and availability unless you invest in expensive high-end storage systems and SAN networks. With the Lenovo S2D cluster, we can achieve enterprise-level performance at a fraction of the cost. What’s more, by replacing our mid-range SAN solution, we reduced the total cost of ownership for our storage environment by 40 percent, helping us to stay competitive.”

Once Braathe Gruppen completes the implementation of its second S2D cluster, the company plans to migrate clients’ environments over to the new platform. Håkon Svendsen notes: “We can’t wait to see what performance will be like once we get everything set up – we’re very confident that the Lenovo-Microsoft solution will help to keep cloud computing service levels high even as demand continues to grow. This will help us to ensure stress-free cloud services for our clients.”

He concludes: “We’ve been very impressed with the support and encouragement we’ve received from Lenovo as we move to a software-defined storage environment. We’re excited to see what the future will bring.”

For more information

To learn more about Lenovo Data Center Systems solutions, contact your Lenovo Sales Representative or Lenovo Business Partner, or visit:

www.lenovo.com/data-center

For more information about Braathe Gruppen, visit: www.braathe.no/en



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