REWE Systems builds mobile inventory application with Red Hat and Viada

German supermarket chain REWE wanted to increase the freshness and availability of perishable items and improve its in-store customer experience. Working with Viada GmbH & Co.KG, a Red Hat partner, REWE Systems GmbH used Red Hat JBoss Enterprise Application Platform (EAP) and Red Hat Data Grid to create a mobile inventory application. Now, staff in more than 3,600 stores have faster access to reliable information on item freshness and inventory management, helping them increase their availability to assist customers and ensure shoppers can find the products they want.

Software

Red Hat® JBoss® Enterprise Applications Platform (EAP)

Red Hat Data Grid (formerly Red Hat JBoss Data Grid)

Red Hat Consulting

Cologne, Germany ●

Headquarters

"*Previously, our in-store staff might have had to use a computer in a back office 20 times in a day. Now, with the application we've built, all of their core work is done with the mobile device while they're out in the store, saving significant time.*"

Horia Petzold-Mircea
IT consultant
REWE Systems GmbH

Retail

140,000 employees

Benefits

- Launched mobile app and devices for in-store staff, improving productivity and customer experience

- Increased stock freshness and reduced waste with better inventory management

- Gained access to innovative and supported technology

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Managing retail stock and staff

REWE Systems GmbH is the IT division of REWE Group, one of Europe's largest retailers and travel agents. In Germany, REWE Group's supermarket chain REWE employs more than 140,000 people and is one of the country's top two supermarket chains. To remain competitive, REWE must effectively manage stock levels in its stores — ensuring in-demand products are available and fruit, vegetables, and dairy products are as fresh as possible.

"We needed to improve our processes for perishable goods. Stores had too much stock left over each day," said Andreas Bukalski, IT Consultant, Enterprise Applications, at REWE Systems. "We wanted to manage deliveries better and improve freshness."

With its previous system, REWE's in-store staff had to go to an office in the back of the store to place orders or print labels. This process wasted time and meant staff were not as available to help customers. To solve this issue, REWE Systems sought to offer mobile devices for its staff to complete orders and print labels.

With a goal to provide faster, mobile management of the stores' inventory, REWE Systems needed a high-performance solution that could quickly handle large amounts of data.

Finding a high-performance mobile database

REWE Systems worked with Viada GmbH & Co. KG, a Red Hat Premier Partner, to find an effective solution. After completing a proof of concept, REWE Systems deployed Red Hat JBoss Enterprise Application Platform (EAP) as the application server for running its new mobile devices and Red Hat JBoss Data Grid as an in-memory data cache.

"We started with an open source solution but switched to Red Hat Data Grid because of its better scalability and because it was easier to use," said Bukalski. "It was the right choice to use the commercial versions of the products from Red Hat, because it would be difficult for us to have the same stability without their support."

REWE's Red Hat solution runs on-premise, managed by REWE Systems' central IT team in Cologne. Viada completed initial implementation and also provides ongoing support, including biannual reviews. In addition, REWE Systems worked with Red Hat Consulting to troubleshoot configuration of Data Grid.

The company's German staff now use 25,000 mobile devices in 3,600 stores across the country. These devices process 15 million service calls per day and run an application that assists with various materials management tasks.

Improving efficiency and service quality

Greater staff productivity and availability

The new mobile devices set up using Red Hat JBoss EAP and Red Hat Data Grid help staff save time and improve productivity with faster processes, such as checking inventory or reordering stock.

"Previously, our in-store staff might have had to use a computer in a back office 20 times in a day," said Horia Petzold-Mircea, IT Consultant at REWE Systems. "Now, with the application we've built, all of their core work is done while they're out in the store, saving significant time."

Staff spending more of their time out in the store has helped improve customer service. "Increased availability of staff in the store is very important for customers," said Petzold-Mircea. "Thanks to the mobile devices, if customers have questions, there is always someone available nearby to ask."

Enhanced inventory management

The new mobile system helps REWE Systems better manage its stock to improve the freshness of perishable items. "For example, you can go into a REWE store at 8:00pm on a Saturday and shop for fresh vegetables and fruit," said Bukalski.

The new system also helps REWE stores better monitor and predict demand, reducing the costs of expired or surplus products every day in its stores.

Easier support and troubleshooting

With Red Hat solutions as the foundation of its mobile application, REWE Systems gained access to cost-effective support from both Red Hat and Viada.

"Overall, we have had stable, fast performance, but we've used support from Red Hat for things like delivering patches when needed," said Petzold-Mircea. "It's also been great working with the Viada team. They're very hands-on and provide important mentoring and knowledge for our staff. We feel we are working together to reach the same goal."

Continuing to find innovative inventory solutions

REWE Systems plans to keep its Red Hat solution running on premise to maintain the high performance required for its mobile devices to work effectively. The company also plans to migrate to the next versions of JBoss EAP and Data Grid to continue taking advantage of open source innovation.

"We want to keep up to date with the latest technology," said Bukalski. "Overall, the Red Hat solution is stable and fast, and we and our store staff are very happy with it."

About REWE

REWE, with a revenue of €23.8 billion in 2018, approximately 140,000 employees, and more than 3,600 stores, is one of the largest food retailers in Germany. REWE supermarkets are run as a branch or by independent REWE retailers. Established in 1927, the cooperative REWE Group is a leading trade and tourism group in Germany and Europe. It employs over 360,300 people and operates 15,686 stores in 20 European countries. In 2018, the company generated total external revenue of more than €61.2 billion. rewe-group.com

About REWE Systems

REWE Systems is the central solution provider of the REWE Group for IT and telecommunication systems. REWE Systems plans, designs, develops, configures, and operates efficient systems and applications for the REWE Group. rewe-systems.com

About Viada

Viada is one of the leading German Red Hat Premier Partners and a strategic partner of international companies in critical software projects. Since 2006, Viada is specializing in software development and IT infrastructure based on JBoss, OpenShift®, and JavaTM Enterprise Edition (Java EE) technologies. viada.de

About Red Hat

Red Hat is the world's leading provider of enterprise open source software solutions, using a community-powered approach to deliver reliable and high-performing Linux, hybrid cloud, container, and Kubernetes technologies. Red Hat helps customers integrate new and existing IT applications, develop cloud-native applications, standardize on our industry-leading operating system, and automate, secure, and manage complex environments. Award-winning support, training, and consulting services make Red Hat a trusted adviser to the Fortune 500. As a strategic partner to cloud providers, system integrators, application vendors, customers, and open source communities, Red Hat can help organizations prepare for the digital future.

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