


 Vistec


Hosting services with IBM System x  
and IDS Scheer

## Vistec achieves high availability for global SAP® solutions

### Vistec

Vistec Semiconductor Systems GmbH is a manufacturer of technologies for the semiconductor industry, specializing in the development of innovative products for process control and electron beam lithography for mask and wafer fabrication. The company was until recently part of Leica Microsystems, a German high-tech precision optics systems producer. Vistec is headquartered in Weilburg, Germany, and has around 350 employees worldwide.

▶ [www.vistec-semi.com](http://www.vistec-semi.com)

When Vistec split away from its parent company, Leica Microsystems, it needed to establish its own set of business applications. The decision to stay with SAP solutions was based on a study – the company had built up extensive internal skills and valued the SAP® software as a key contributor to business success. However, Vistec consciously decided not to build up internal staff and infrastructure to maintain the high levels of reliability and performance it needed for the planned SAP software environment.

Vistec chose to outsource the hosting and maintenance of its SAP® applications to IDS Scheer, selecting two IBM System x3850 servers, each with four dual-core Intel Xeon processors, as the platform for both the SAP® ERP solution and the SAP® NetWeaver Business Intelligence component. The x3850s are configured in a mutual failover mode, and are housed in separate data centers for added resilience.

### The Challenge

When Vistec gained its independence from Leica Microsystems, the company needed rapidly to establish its own business application environment. The management and employees of Vistec wanted to continue using the SAP ERP software they had used while part of Leica, but it did not make financial sense for the company to invest in its own data centers and specialist software maintenance personnel. Nevertheless, with subsidiaries operating in multiple time zones across North America, Europe and Asia, Vistec required high availability and reliability for its SAP software environment.

### The Benefits

The outsourced solution running on x3850s gives Vistec a stable, reliable, high-performance platform for its business-critical SAP solutions – at low cost and without the need for capital investment. IDS Scheer provides a commitment to enterprise-class service-level agreements at known monthly costs, leaving Vistec free to focus on its core competence, safe in the knowledge that its SAP software will be managed optimally.

### Key Solution Components

- ▶ Industry: Manufacturing, Electronics Applications: SAP® ERP 6.0, including financial accounting and cost controlling, materials management, production planning and sales and distribution functionality; SAP NetWeaver Business Intelligence
- ▶ Hardware: IBM System x™ (model x3850)
- ▶ Services: IBM and SAP Business Partner IDS Scheer



## With IBM System x and IDS Scheer hosting services

### Fully hosted solution

As a mid-sized business operating in global markets, Vistec wanted to have the advantages of an enterprise-class ERP solution without the corresponding infrastructure and staffing requirements. A fully hosted solution was the obvious answer, enabling Vistec to benefit from world-class data center facilities and 24/7 support without requiring any capital investment.

Vistec chose to work with IBM and SAP Business Partner IDS Scheer AG, a specialist in business process management (BPM) software, solutions and services for corporations and public organizations worldwide. IDS Scheer and Vistec selected two IBM System x3850 servers, hosted at two data centers for added protection against disaster, to run the SAP ERP 6.0 environment and the SAP NetWeaver Business Intelligence (SAP NetWeaver BI) component. The two x3850s bring mainframe-inspired technologies to the IBM industry-standard server market and provide enhanced performance, availability, scalability, systems management, and power and cooling – while benefiting from the lower costs associated with industry-standard hardware and software.

“Outsourcing the hosting of our SAP solutions to IDS Scheer gave us access to world-class facilities and services without the high cost of building up non-core infrastructure and skills in-house,” says Wilma Simonis, SAP Support Manager, Vistec Semiconductor Systems GmbH. “IDS Scheer uses clustered IBM System x servers to provide high levels of availability and performance for our business-critical SAP systems. This also means that we benefit from the high performance and low power consumption of the Intel® Xeon® processor architecture.”

The two System x servers are configured in a mutual failover cluster, with each capable of taking over the other’s workload in the unlikely scenario of a total failure. The first x3850 – which, like its counterpart in the second data center, has four dual-core Intel Xeon processors, 18GB of RAM and two 36GB hard disks – runs the production environment for the SAP ERP software, as well as the development and quality assurance environments for the SAP NetWeaver BI component. The second x3850 hosts the opposite pairs in the cluster: production for the SAP NetWeaver BI component, and development and quality assurance for the SAP ERP solution. The main storage is provided by a storage area network in each data center, including tape backup, with cross-site mirroring for added resilience.

### Taking advantage of existing skills

“Vistec chose IDS Scheer to host our SAP software environment because they offered a complete solution at a competitive price, with management according to ITIL principles,” says Wilma Simonis. “The selection of SAP software was never in doubt: our employees had built up significant knowledge of the software when Vistec was part of Leica, so it made sense to remain on the platform and take advantage of our existing skills. In addition to avoiding the cost and delay of training users on new software, this also eliminated the potential risk of moving to a different application. Furthermore, the Vistec management team was very happy with the capabilities and functionality of SAP applications.”

„IDS Scheer uses clustered IBM System x servers to provide high levels of availability and performance for our business-critical SAP systems.“

Wilma Simonis

SAP Support Manager

Vistec Semiconductor Systems GmbH

„The partnership between IDS Scheer and Vistec is particularly strong: we have a great deal of confidence in the quality and reliability of their services, and they have an excellent record of observing the agreed SLAs.“

Wilma Simonis

SAP Support Manager

Vistec Semiconductor Systems GmbH

Staying on SAP software meant that Vistec could re-use reports designed for the previous solution without any difficulties. The only major work during the migration was to combine two sections of the business that had previously run on different SAP software environments within Leica. The new SAP ERP environment at Vistec has 180 users, and a further 20 employees use the SAP NetWeaver BI solution. The total amount of data managed in the SAP environment is around 800GB, and typical response times for the ERP application are 400ms.

### Hands-off management

Under the terms of the outsourcing contract, IDS Scheer is responsible for the hosting and basic administration of the SAP software environment – at the level of the servers, storage, database and operating system. The company also provides a helpdesk service and offers guaranteed availability of 99.5 per cent for Vistec’s SAP environment, with recovery from disaster within five hours. IDS Scheer also hosts a separate tax software solution that helps Vistec to comply with US tax regulations. Vistec works with a different third-party specialist for functional enhancements and developments within the SAP environment, enabling a ‘hands-off’ approach to ERP. Wilma Simonis is the sole SAP solution specialist at Vistec, and works with both external suppliers to manage the entire global solution from a single point of control.

“With the outsourced solution, we can simply decide for new functionality and instruct our partners to deliver it – it is very fast and easy,” says Wilma Simonis. “The partnership between IDS Scheer and

Vistec is particularly strong: we have a great deal of confidence in the quality and reliability of their services, and they have an excellent record of observing the agreed SLAs. Working with a large external specialist also means we have access to their extensive experience and knowledge, helping us to develop our capabilities in the right direction.“

### Reliable, fast, low-cost solution

Vistec’s global footprint means that there are very limited windows for scheduled downtime, and that any loss of availability for the company’s SAP software environment could have a damaging effect on the business. In addition, many of the company’s manufacturing facilities operate six or seven days a week, further reducing the tolerance for planned or unplanned outages. IDS Scheer’s top-class data center facilities and know-how, combined with the in-built resilience of the IBM System x3850 servers, ensure that Vistec’s SAP solutions offer extremely high uptime in support of its global business.

“Working with IDS Scheer and running on the highly reliable IBM System x platform gives Vistec optimal availability without correspondingly high costs,” says Walter Friedl, IT Manager at Vistec.

“Outsourcing means that we have access to state-of-the-art IBM hardware and data-center facilities, and to large teams of highly skilled consultants – without the cost and complexity of maintaining those facilities and capabilities in-house. The economies of scale achieved by IDS Scheer enable an enterprise-class service at a price that makes financial sense for a mid-market company like ours.“

„Working with IDS Scheer and running on the highly reliable IBM System x platform gives Vistec optimal availability without correspondingly high costs.“

Walter Friedl

IT Manager

Vistec Semiconductor Systems GmbH



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