

The background image shows a blurred checkout counter in a supermarket. A barcode scanner is in the foreground on the left, and a bag of oranges is in the foreground on the right. A person's hand is visible in the background, pointing at a document.

Dansk Supermarked: Catering to Customers with the Operations Control Center and SAP® MaxAttention™

Company

Dansk Supermarked A/S

Headquarters

Højbjerg, Denmark

Industry, products, and services

Retail – groceries and general merchandise

Revenue

DKr 56 billion (US\$10.3 billion)

Web site

www.dsg.dk

SAP® solutions and services

SAP® Solution Manager application management solution and SAP MaxAttention™ services

Partner

IBM (hosting)
www.ibm.com

Exploring the role of IT in retail

The right item at the right price. A friendly smile and the help you need. The knowledge that you can always count on the same great shopping experience. In Denmark and other parts of western Europe, customers know where to go for all of this and more: Dansk Supermarked. Since 1960, Dansk Supermarked Group (DSG) has been **delivering the goods** in an orderly and timely manner – and its approach to IT has supported this.

Go to the About us page on the DSG Web site (www.dsg.dk) and read the following credo: “Your wishes. Our passion. It is a sport for us to fulfill your wishes. Even the ones you do not know about.”

DSG prides itself on understanding its customers and taking action accordingly. This is why it uses technology to monitor what’s happening across three brands, Bilka, Føtex, and Netto. Through these brands, DSG sells groceries and general merchandise in more than 1,300 stores and two shopping malls in Denmark, Germany, Poland, and Sweden.

This complexity makes for a host of IT challenges. A long-time SAP customer, DSG wanted a way to stay on top of help desk and incident management issues as it rolled out a standardized template for the SAP® Solution Manager application management solution. This is why it implemented an operations control center as part of its SAP MaxAttention™ services – a premium support offering delivered by the SAP Active Global Support organization.

[Read more](#) ▶



Introduction

Vision

Why SAP

Solutions and services

Benefits

Maximized uptime and insight across global operations

In 1959, before opening his first store in Aarhus, Denmark, DSG founder Herman Salling took a trip around the world to find inspiration for his retail outlet of the future. This emphasis on innovation has persisted. DSG was a pioneer in IT outsourcing for the retail industry, working with IBM to host its systems on a remote site in Copenhagen, Denmark. This has enabled DSG to maintain a lean internal IT team, thereby keeping IT costs down.

One challenge with outsourcing, however, was a lack of IT visibility. “We used a range of nonintegrated monitoring tools,” says Mikael Thystrup, project manager at DSG. “The result was difficulty getting the right information in a timely manner. This made it hard to pinpoint important issues and zero in on resolutions.”

For a retail company where timely insight is critical, this situation posed problems. Point-of-sale (POS) issues, for example, can quickly lead to long queues at the checkout counter, leaving customers dissatisfied. Inaccurate warehouse orders can lead to delayed deliveries and merchandise outages. DSG also runs a sophisticated pick-by-voice inventory system in its warehouse and has shown that system delays of as little as 0.2 seconds can impact performance.

To help address these issues and ensure availability, DSG wanted greater insight and control regarding its IT landscape – even as it continued with its outsourcing strategy.

“We lacked end-to-end monitoring. SAP helped us achieve it.”

Mikael Thystrup, Project Manager, Dansk Supermarked A/S



Introduction

Vision

Why SAP

Solutions and services

Benefits

A better way forward for outsourced IT operations

To maintain its leadership position and differentiate itself from the competition, DSG is constantly pursuing IT transformation. In this vein, it launched an initiative based on a well-known SAP mantra: “Run SAP Like a Factory.” Part of this initiative involved an upgrade to the latest version of the SAP Solution Manager application management solution – including a standardized template for global operations. In the midst of this initiative, the IT group at DSG discussed its IT monitoring challenges with its SAP representative, who suggested an operations control center (OCC) as a possible solution.

Offered through the SAP Active Global Support organization, the OCC option is available to SAP customers that use premium support services such as SAP MaxAttention or SAP ActiveEmbedded. As a customer of SAP MaxAttention, DSG is in a position to take advantage of these services.

The value of the OCC is that it links business processes and technical monitoring – thus enabling more efficient resolution of incidents and even the prevention of incidents through proactive system tracking. As part of the OCC offering, customers also benefit from the mission control center at SAP, which provides access to seasoned SAP experts to help organizations use standard SAP software functionality to address business requirements.

“For DSG, one of the main appeals of the OCC was that it offered a way to gain better visibility of our IT operations,” says Thystrup. “We feel we get the constant support we need to identify issues immediately and make adjustments where needed. This helps us get the absolute most out of our environment.”



Introduction

Vision

Why SAP

Solutions and services

Benefits

Enhanced visibility and control

The introduction of the OCC at DSG started with an exercise in road-map building that helped establish requirements and expectations. This exercise involved an analysis of the customer's environment, the definition of appropriate key performance indicators for monitoring, a detailed setup plan, training for key team members, and mechanisms for ongoing optimization. "The road-map approach helped us put all the issues on the table before moving forward with the OCC," says Thystrup. "As a result, when it came time to go live, the process went very smoothly."

DSG decided to locate its OCC team in India. With just five members, this team delivers 24x7 coverage of DSG's IT environment, which is hosted by outsourcing partner IBM in a data center in Copenhagen. Thystrup, meanwhile, works out of DSG's headquarters where he coordinates remotely with the OCC to address issues and continuously optimize the landscape.

Playing a critical role in all of this remote coordination is SAP Solution Manager, which supports a centralized view of IT operations across SAP and non-SAP software. Whether it's the OCC team, the IBM partner, or Thystrup and his IT group in Højbjerg, everyone has access to the same information at once. This visibility enables DSG to run IT operations with greater efficiency and at lower cost – while helping ensure the uptime levels required to satisfy users and customers.

"With our OCC, not only do we have a single version of the truth that puts everybody on the same page, but we also have a way to address issues quickly and constantly improve our landscape."

Mikael Thystrup, Project Manager, Dansk Supermarked A/S



Introduction

Vision

Why SAP

Solutions and services

Benefits

Valuing IT as a strategic partner

With its OCC in place, DSG gained control over outsourced operations to help ensure higher levels of system availability. Monitoring is deeply integrated with incident management through an alert in-box that gives IBM and DSG the visibility to dramatically improve response times and prevent incidents from occurring in the first place. “The OCC was so efficient at identifying issues that the organization had to implement new procedures in order to catch up,” says Thystrup. “That’s a good problem to have.”

All of this has tangible benefits for DSG’s IT environment. User monitoring enables the organization to minimize POS issues – increasing customer satisfaction, improving the timeliness of warehouse deliveries, streamlining sales reporting, and much more.

The OCC also helps DSG foster a strategic relationship with SAP as it builds up a best-in-class, retail-focused system based on SAP software. For example, it has already developed SAP BusinessObjects™ Dashboards software, which helps simulate its inventory pick-by-voice system so that it can review issues and find resolutions faster. Moving forward, the company plans to take advantage of SAP technology innovations such as in-memory computing with the SAP HANA® platform. In this way, the OCC at DSG can continue to help the company maximize the value of its SAP software investment and differentiate itself in an intensely competitive retail market.

“We have a strong process for handling incidents, which helps ensure a fast resolution time. One of the reasons is our 24x7 system monitoring, enabling quick responses to OSS messages.”

Kent Clausen, Head of IT Operations, Dansk Supermarked A/S



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