

Lalandia Billund on the technological front edge



Lalandia Billund's IT Manager, Niels Mølgaard Thorsen, in the Aquadome of the holiday center

Overview

■ **The challenge**

Lalandia were going to build Northern Europe's largest roofed holiday center from scratch, and the company needed assistance with designing, delivering, and implementing a total IT solution with everything from server rooms and software to IT infrastructure.

■ **The solution**

IBM was chosen and designed, delivered, and implemented a total IT solution for Lalandia, which included mirrored server rooms, with System x 3850 M2 servers, VMware, storage, IBM Tivoli Storage Manager, and a Cisco network solution. In addition, IBM's consultants have, from the very beginning, worked in close cooperation with Lalandia's IT professionals on solution selection and ongoing challenges.

■ **The benefits**

From day one, Lalandia Billund had a future-proof IT setup that guarantees secure, efficient, optimal use of the system capacity. And it supports Lalandia's business with efficient processes and intelligent solutions – such as radio-frequency identification (RFID) payment cards.

Denmark now has Northern Europe's largest roofed holiday center, Lalandia Billund, with a total of 40,000 roofed square meters and 761 architect-designed vacation cottages. The doors were opened on 24 April 2008, and during the months and weeks before the premier, there was, of course, hectic activity and nervousness among the employees.

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Every IT manager's dream

One of the very busy employees was IT manager Niels Mølgaard Thorsen, who had the responsibility for building a total IT system for the new center from the very beginning. It was the kind of challenge that most IT managers only dream about, but for Niels Mølgaard Thorsen the dream came through when he joined Lalandia in 2007, after 15 years at LEGO.

One of the first tasks was, of course, to choose suppliers and partners, and Niels Mølgaard Thorsen admits that he did not shop around much, but had a clear idea that he would make use of IBM. Niels Mølgaard Thorsen explains:

“We actually didn't call for tenders, because I had no doubt that IBM was the right partner for me. There were two reasons: Firstly, I worked with IBM for the last five years at LEGO and my experience with the cooperation was good.”

“Secondly, IBM was already Lalandia's preferred partner in our associated company in Rødby. The two centers have equal status, and we operate with a close cooperation so it made a lot of sense to have a joint partner that could ensure maximum synchronization.”

Finally, Mølgaard Thorsen points out that from the beginning, he had no doubts about having a virtual environment for both servers and the network, and in his opinion, IBM was the strongest supplier in this area.

Reliance on intelligent solutions

IBM has had the opportunity to follow the development of Lalandia Billund first hand, from a “plowed field” up to today, when the holiday center's 40,000 square meters can offer an aquadome, play areas, bowling lanes, indoor golf courses, and so on, and

can welcome thousands of guests. IBM's client representative, Nina Rasmussen, says:

“For us, it is also something very special to have the opportunity to help build a completely new business from the beginning. The work with Lalandia has involved a large number of completely basic elements, such as the IT infrastructure for the entire center and building two mirrored server rooms.”

“The solutions that were chosen in Lalandia are characterized by a great desire to be in the innovative forefront. For example, from the beginning, a wireless network was set up throughout the center, and all access control, booking, ticket sales, and payment in the center is done using RFID tags in the form of a disposable armband so



During the construction period, Lalandia Billund has regularly been photographed from above

that the visitors do not have to possess cash or credit cards.”

When a family has booked a vacation cottage, it receives a welcome letter and a number of arm bands corresponding to the number of people who have booked the cottage. The idea is that the guests wear the arm bands throughout their stay.

Inspired by the Italian renaissance

Much of the new Lalandia is built in the style of an Italian renaissance city. Original materials were obtained from Italy, and Italian craftsmen have been in Billund to ensure as authentic an impression as possible and to give the brand new buildings a patina, as if they were several hundred years old.

In contrast, in the IT area, there is nothing antiquated about Lalandia's technical setup: On the contrary, the two mirrored server rooms, which for security reasons are 80 meters apart, point far into the future with regard to security solutions, scalability with regard to capacity, and the possibility to expand using new applications. Everything is mirrored by the two server rooms, even at SAN level, and based on IBM's recommendation, Niels Mølgaard Thorsen has chosen to secure the system using an IBM Tivoli Storage Manager, which requires a minimum of tape switching and thus provides a high degree of user friendliness.

Openness in the cooperation

Even though Lalandia Billund does not need to invest significantly in

new hardware in the coming years, Niels Mølgaard Thorsen expects the cooperation with IBM to continue, not least with regard to being sparring partners with IBM's consultants.

“For me, a keyword is openness in the cooperation. This means that as a customer, I can reject the advice if it does not live up to my expectations completely. And it means that I expect resistance from the consultants I ask the advice of. I want my opinions about the choices I am planning to make to be challenged and IBM's consultants have been good at objecting.”

What has IBM delivered?

Hardware components:

Storage - Disk

Storage: DS4700 Express

Storage - Storage Area Network (SAN)

Storage - Tape and optical (TS3200 Tape Library)

System x:

System x: System x3850 M2

System x: System x running VMware

Bladecenter:

Bladecenter JS21

Bladecenter running VMWare

Software components:

IBM Tivoli Storage Manager (TSM)

Services components:

Cisco-network



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