

40 Years  
PLANAT ERP

relyon

Microsoft

# Supercharging productivity and resiliency with a cost-efficient, powerful hyperconverged solution.

How **PLANAT GmbH** used Lenovo ThinkAgile MX Series with Microsoft Windows Server 2019 Datacenter Edition to increase efficiency and boost employee satisfaction.

Lenovo Infrastructure Solutions  
for The Data-Centered

Lenovo

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## Background

PLANAT GmbH is a leading software company headquartered near Stuttgart, Germany, specializing in advanced production planning and manufacturing execution systems. Based on more than 40 years of industry experience, its FEPA ERP and planning solution is perfectly tailored to the needs of the manufacturing companies it serves. With five offices, PLANAT delivers reliable standard software that is “Made in Germany”, with custom-developed extensions to help its clients optimize their processes and boost operational efficiencies.

Today, more than 11,000 business users around the world rely on FEPA ERP. Clients include small and medium businesses in Germany, as well as world-leading enterprises with a global footprint across a wide range of sectors including automotive, plant engineering, cable production, electronics, and metalworking.



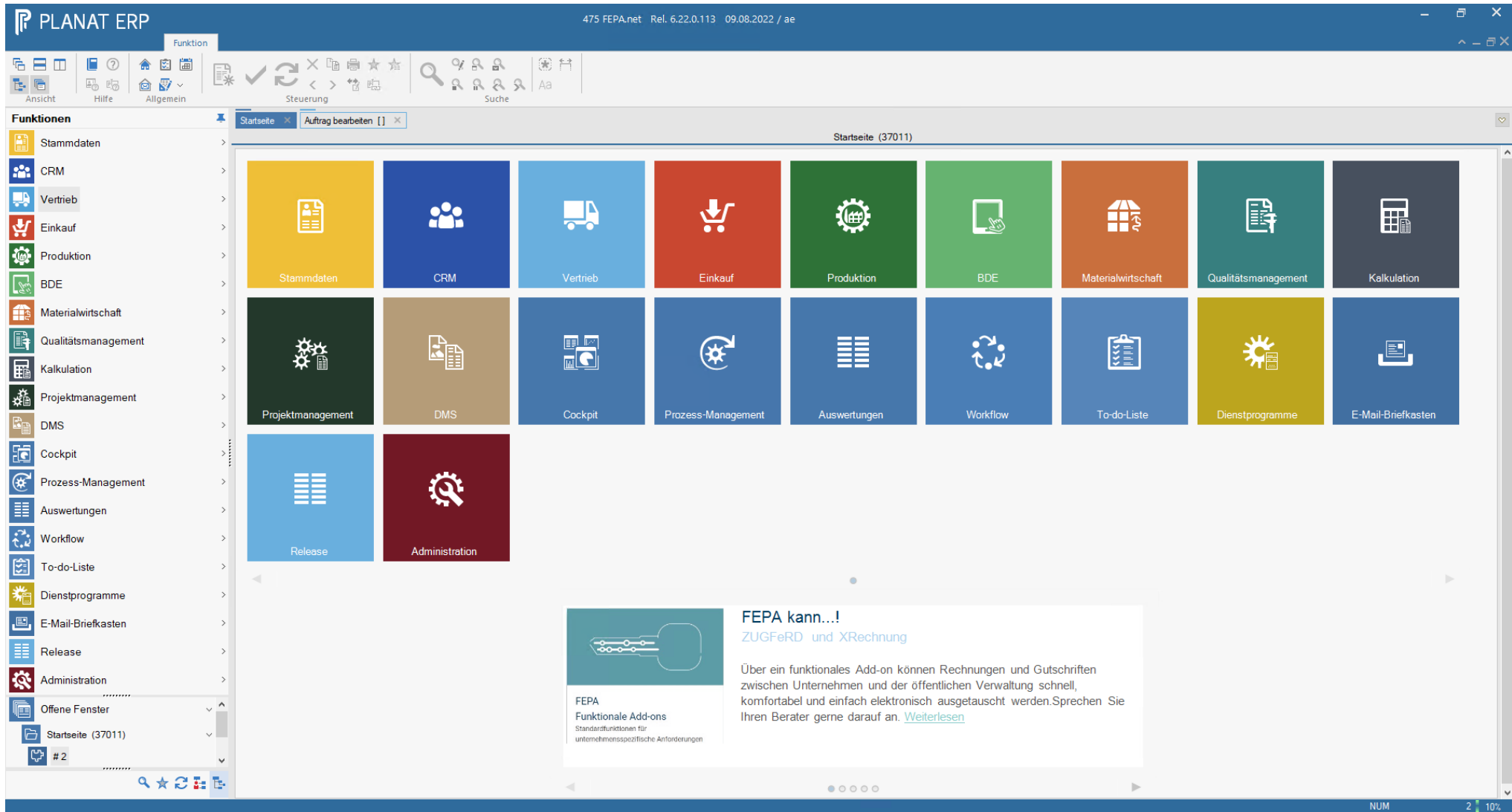


Figure 1: Screenshot of the PLANAT FEPA ERP cockpit.

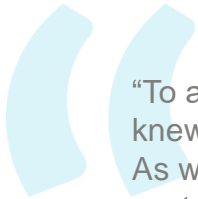
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## Challenge

PLANAT has always had a close relationship with its clients. The company uses its own ERP software to run its business, which also helps staff to understand its clients' needs even better and provide outstanding consulting services. With client numbers going up and business data growing, everyday tasks at PLANAT began to take longer and longer.

Andreas Eisfeld, Head of IT at PLANAT GmbH, says: "With ever larger data volumes and more complex processes, routine workflows such as accessing client details in the CRM would take up valuable time. At some point, our IT was no longer aligned with our business ambitions. This situation affected our productivity and our staff could not always get all their tasks done on time. This hampered our services and slowed down business growth, prompting us to look for ways to speed up our operations."

Due to the limitations of its aging IT infrastructure, the company also had to start prioritizing backup tasks. This increased the management overhead and affected the business risk for non-critical workloads.



"To accelerate internal workflows and become more agile as a business, we knew we had to invest in our IT infrastructure and modernize our data center. As we wanted to drive innovation and service excellence, we were looking for cost-efficient, fast, and future-proof solutions."

**Andreas Eisfeld**  
Head of IT, PLANAT GmbH

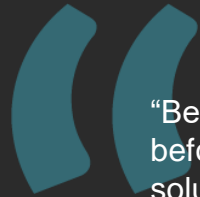
A woman with long dark hair, wearing glasses and a black leather jacket over a brown turtleneck, is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred office environment with blue tones.

## Why Lenovo? HCI expertise, flexible configurations, and excellent customer service.

After evaluating the market, PLANAT decided to move to a hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) solution. “We requested offers from different vendors and partners,” recalls Einfeld. “Many still proposed traditional, complex, and costly three-tier architectures with separate servers, storage, and networking systems. But we knew that to achieve our goals, we needed a more radical change.”

With its deep HCI expertise and its own cloud running on the Lenovo ThinkAgile MX Series platform, Lenovo Gold Partner relyon AG made a strong impression. “The teams at relyon and Lenovo understood our needs and could answer all our questions,” confirms Einfeld. “In contrast to other vendors, relyon and Lenovo demonstrated deep knowledge of cutting-edge HCI cluster solutions, and provided valuable guidance and support throughout the selection and negotiation process.”

PLANAT got the opportunity to remotely test two different configurations at the Lenovo Executive Briefing Center in Stuttgart. “Flexible remote access to the test environment really enabled us to rapidly work out the optimal components and sizing together with the Lenovo team,” says Einfeld.



“Being able to run our own workloads with our custom configuration in a test environment before finalizing the order helped us to maximize the value we could get from the Lenovo solution. The new compact and cost-efficient solution from relyon and Lenovo delivers fast performance with full-flash storage and high single-core speeds within our IT budget.”

**Andreas Eisfeld**  
Head of IT, PLANAT GmbH

## Speeding up data center modernization with Lenovo ThinkAgile MX Series.

PLANAT worked with partner relyon to complete the initial setup of the Lenovo ThinkAgile MX Certified Nodes and the Microsoft Windows Server HCI solution. After some training by relyon on the pre-tested and pre-configured solution, PLANAT managed the migration of existing workloads to the new platform independently.

“Working with relyon and Lenovo, we were quickly able to make the switch to software-defined infrastructure,” adds Einfeld. “By opting for a switchless configuration, we saved costs, minimized the physical footprint, and also reduced the overall complexity of our two-node cluster.”

As part of its data center modernization project, PLANAT also implemented a new Lenovo ThinkSystem SR550 server for its Veeam Backup & Replication solution.

Approximately 40 virtual machines run on the Lenovo ThinkAgile MX cluster, including the company’s central ERP instance, and it provides virtual desktop services across the full range of business departments. PLANAT also relies on the Lenovo ThinkAgile MX platform for quality management and application testing.

“Lenovo ThinkAgile MX Series delivers exactly what we wanted,” states Einfeld. “Based on the great performance and our positive experience with relyon, we are already planning to deploy another Lenovo ThinkAgile MX cluster at a second location to speed up development cycles and build times, further accelerating product innovation. More and more clients are requesting cloud solutions, so we are also expanding our partnership with relyon to offer our clients a full-service solution with software from us and hosting in the relyon cloud, also running on Lenovo ThinkAgile MX Series.”



“It was fast and easy to get started with the Lenovo ThinkAgile MX Certified Nodes. The team at relyon was a great help. Both the deployment and migration went very smoothly.”

**Andreas Eisfeld**  
Head of IT, PLANAT GmbH



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## Results

As a software company and a Microsoft Gold Partner, Microsoft Windows Server 2019 Datacenter Edition running on Lenovo ThinkAgile MX Series was an attractive option for PLANAT. The consolidated HCI solution bundle combines Hyper-V virtualization, Storage Spaces Direct as resilient software-defined data platform, and software-defined networking to offer flexibility with a high level of automation. “Our bottom-line benefits from 20% lower operating costs thanks to running the Microsoft Windows Server HCI solution on Lenovo ThinkAgile MX Series,” confirms Eisfeld. “As an integrated software solution from a single vendor, it’s easy to manage and already included in our Microsoft Windows Server Data Center Edition licenses.”

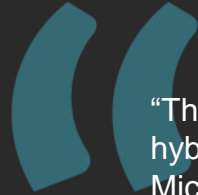
The fast performance of the new Lenovo servers has boosted staff productivity and employee satisfaction at PLANAT. “In the past, we had been using systems from a different vendor and some routine tasks like logging into our remote desktops and pulling up client data in the CRM could take between 30 seconds and 5 minutes,” says Eisfeld. “That added up and slowed us down. Now, we can complete many activities 10x to 30x faster. This is a game-changer, making us much more efficient—and our employees are a lot happier too.”

By deploying Lenovo ThinkAgile MX Series with the Microsoft Windows Server HCI solution, PLANAT has also increased its business resiliency. “Our goal was to increase data and system availability while reducing complexity,” explains Eisfeld. “Thanks to the nested resiliency feature with failover clustering, our data is better protected against multiple node and storage failures than before, giving us piece of mind and reducing business risk.”

To add another level of data protection, PLANAT upgraded its backup server. “Before the upgrade, backups would take over four hours and we could no longer do a full backup of all systems every day without affecting production operations,” says Eisfeld. “Backing up non-critical environments only at weekends exposed the business to additional risk of data loss. With the new Lenovo ThinkSystem SR550 solution, data backups are four times faster and all systems are backed up every day. On top of that, we can recover our systems much quicker than before, massively improving our recovery time objective.”



- ✓ **10x to 30x faster routine tasks boost productivity and employee satisfaction**
- ✓ **30% lower infrastructure costs with smaller physical footprint and fewer components to manage**
- ✓ **20% savings in operating costs; licensing costs reduced by €5,000 a year with consolidated HCI solution**
- ✓ **4x faster and more complete data backups reduce risk of data loss and improve business continuity**



“Thanks to relyon and Lenovo, we now run our entire IT services for on-site, remote, and hybrid workplaces in-house with fast performance and low complexity. We already know the Microsoft ecosystem and tools very well, which makes it easy for us to manage the Windows Server HCI solution efficiently. In this respect, we are similar to many of our clients. Based on our own experience, we can now confidently recommend Lenovo ThinkAgile MX Series as a future-proof reference architecture for our FEPA ERP solution for small IT teams with limited budgets, so our clients can focus on their core business and not on IT.”

**Andreas Eisfeld**  
Head of IT, PLANAT GmbH

# What will you do with Lenovo software-defined infrastructure solutions?

The Data-Centered reduce costs and boost performance with Lenovo smarter infrastructure solutions, powered by Microsoft.

[Explore Lenovo Software-Defined Infrastructure Solutions](#)



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