

Creating new business opportunities with a cost-effective, next-generation cloud service.

How **SHD** built on Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Series with VMware virtualization to align its IT with its business objectives and launch a new, more dynamic high-performance cloud service.

Lenovo Infrastructure Solutions
for The Data-Centered

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Background

SHD AG, an international IT company headquartered in Andernach, Germany, has been a leading provider of IT solutions for the furniture and kitchen industries for almost 40 years. More than 100,000 users rely on SHD's wide range of industry-leading ERP applications and planning tools. In Germany, 75% of the top furniture retailers use SHD solutions and one in every two kitchens is planned using SHD software.

Complementing its Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) and on-premises software portfolio, SHD also offers comprehensive IT outsourcing services to more than 600 of its customers through its SHD Technologie und Service GmbH subsidiary.

SHD has more than 600 employees and generates annual revenues of EUR 74.2 million.

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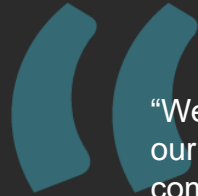
Challenge

Providing a perfect customer experience is key to building a trusted relationship when selling furniture and kitchens. Planning a kitchen can be a tricky, highly personal task, so sellers want to avoid any unnecessary distraction—they require tools that are easy and just work. It can be very difficult for small specialist retailers to attract and retain the qualified IT talent needed to run modern business services reliably.

Stephan Röder, Executive Director and Head of Sales and Organization at SHD Technologie und Service GmbH, says: “Many smaller companies do not have big in-house IT teams. Every day, we hear from customers about how difficult and expensive it is to find IT staff. They want to accelerate and modernize their IT processes to promote growth and business development. That’s where we come in. To make life easier for customers, we are building on our extensive industry experience and expanding our cloud and managed services offering.”

With SHD’s cloud business already having grown steadily in recent years, the company realized that its current IT infrastructure could no longer be extended easily within its existing data center. “To efficiently scale our cloud services, we needed to achieve higher workload density, move to a more consolidated architecture, and also improve energy efficiency to support an even more sustainable Green IT strategy,” confirms Röder.

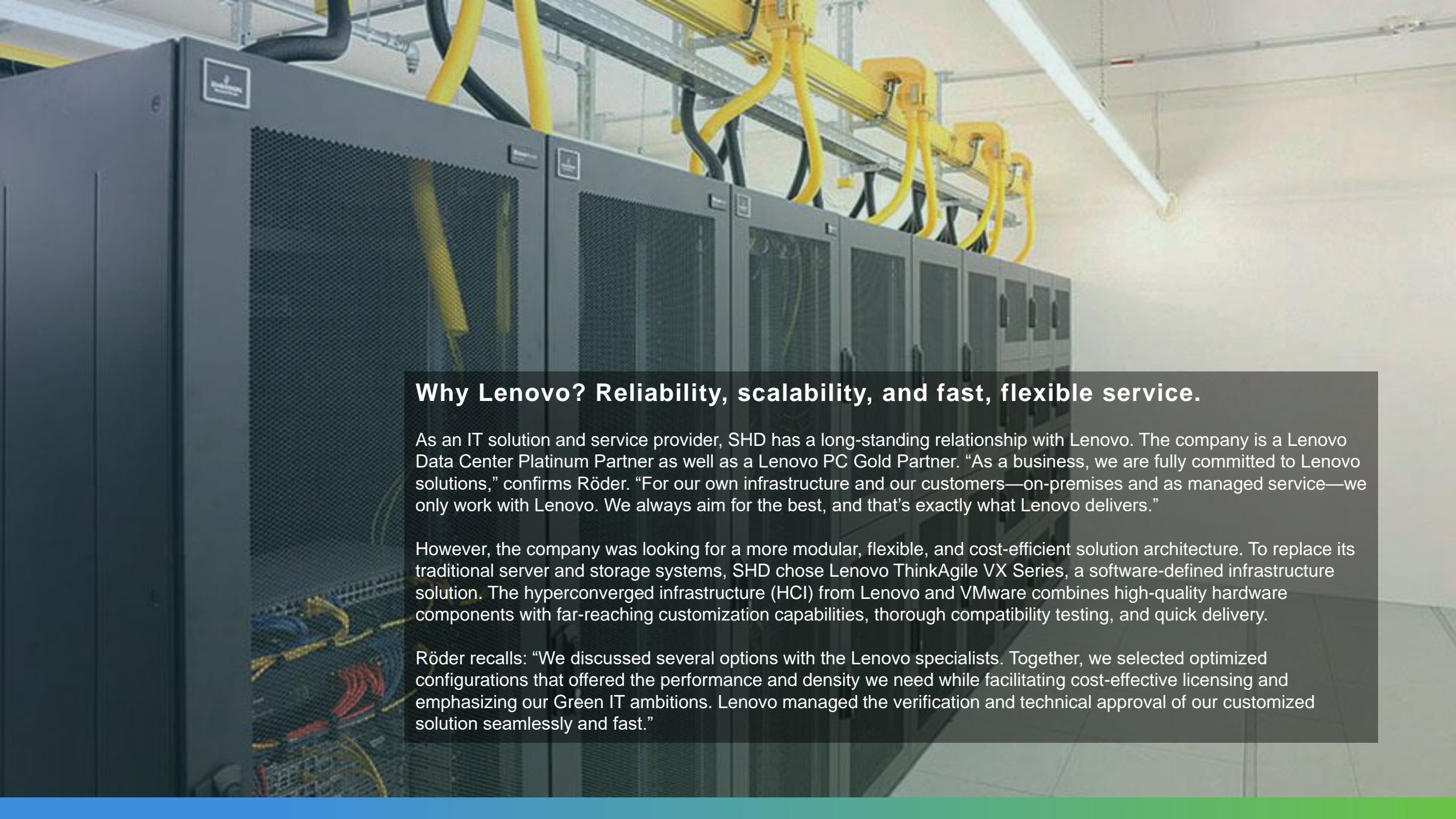




“We are determined to make the most of new business opportunities. Planning changes to our existing infrastructure and adding new servers and storage systems had become very complex. To deliver dynamic cloud services, we needed to modernize our entire data center.”

Stephan Röder

Executive Director and Head of Sales and Organization, SHD Technologie und Service GmbH



Why Lenovo? Reliability, scalability, and fast, flexible service.

As an IT solution and service provider, SHD has a long-standing relationship with Lenovo. The company is a Lenovo Data Center Platinum Partner as well as a Lenovo PC Gold Partner. “As a business, we are fully committed to Lenovo solutions,” confirms Röder. “For our own infrastructure and our customers—on-premises and as managed service—we only work with Lenovo. We always aim for the best, and that’s exactly what Lenovo delivers.”

However, the company was looking for a more modular, flexible, and cost-efficient solution architecture. To replace its traditional server and storage systems, SHD chose Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Series, a software-defined infrastructure solution. The hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) from Lenovo and VMware combines high-quality hardware components with far-reaching customization capabilities, thorough compatibility testing, and quick delivery.

Röder recalls: “We discussed several options with the Lenovo specialists. Together, we selected optimized configurations that offered the performance and density we need while facilitating cost-effective licensing and emphasizing our Green IT ambitions. Lenovo managed the verification and technical approval of our customized solution seamlessly and fast.”

Building a next-generation cloud.

To power its newly launched SHD Performance Cloud and SHD Performance Cloud Pro offerings, the company implemented 16 Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Certified Nodes, equipped with low-latency NVMe drives. Each node provides outstanding speed and parallelization of virtualized cloud workloads running on the VMware HCI software stack.

This hyperconverged solution is built on VMware vSphere® and VMware vSAN™ virtualization software for maximum performance and security. “With Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Series and the leading HCI software stack from VMware, we moved to a truly distributed cloud architecture, eliminating single points of failure,” explains Röder. “vSAN gives us seamlessly integrated storage for consistency in operations and tooling across our entire landscape, enabling us to reduce complexity and workload for our infrastructure teams.”

SHD also uses Lenovo XClarity Pro and VMware vCenter® to manage and monitor the new solution. The company simplified infrastructure administration and maintenance using the Lenovo XClarity Integrator for VMware vCenter. The Lenovo solution also supports VMware vSphere Lifecycle Manager™ to accelerate and standardize virtualization firmware updates across the entire cloud cluster.



“Currently, we are running over 2,500 virtual machines in our data center and we expect to win many more customers for our new, fully virtualized, and highly automated SHD Performance Cloud powered by Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Series. The easy management and scalability of Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Series gives us the agility and efficiency we need to succeed in our market segment.”

Stephan Röder

Executive Director and Head of Sales and Organization,
SHD Technologie und Service GmbH



“With Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Certified Nodes, we have certainty that everything will work smoothly. The nodes are fully validated and integrated with the VMware software. And thanks to the knowledge and insights of Lenovo, we were able to balance cost and performance perfectly to suit our cloud workloads and growth objectives.”

Stephan Röder

Executive Director and Head of Sales and Organization,
SHD Technologie und Service GmbH

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Results

After selecting Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Series, SHD decided that the new solution would be the perfect foundation for a broader reinvention of its business.

“At first, this was just a technology upgrade for us,” says Röder. “But as soon as we grasped the full potential that Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Series offered us, we changed tack and developed a far-reaching business transformation strategy. With our new SHD Performance Cloud services, we can give customers additional flexibility with more differentiated service levels. We can develop our business in new ways and align our services more closely with the different business requirements of various segments and customers to generate more dynamic business growth.”

Leveraging the Lenovo ThinkAgile VX platform, the company is also planning to offer more easily scalable SaaS products in its SHD Performance Cloud. “Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Series facilitates our shift towards increasing service and subscription revenues,” confirms Röder. “Customers already use our add-on SaaS products for tasks such as validating complex kitchen designs created using our in-store software. Now we can take these services to a new level and extend the capacity very rapidly if required. Before, we needed to add servers, storage, and network equipment separately. Now, we just need to slide a new box into the rack and connect it to the existing network. That’s much faster and everybody can do it, so we don’t need to send highly skilled technical staff to our colocated data center.”

The new and highly standardized IT infrastructure from Lenovo reduces complexity and cuts the time spent on administration and maintenance by 50%. “We use the same components and configuration for our internal systems, our cloud services, and on-premises installations in customer data centers,” emphasizes Röder. “The returns for every minute saved is huge, since the effect is multiplied many times over. We are faster and can provide even better, more efficient support to our customers because we know the configuration so well from our own environment. Staff can also take on maintenance tasks more flexibly, which helps us to schedule the overall workload much more effectively. And of course, on-premises deployments of Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Series are easier to manage for our customers too.”

By deploying the Lenovo ThinkAgile VX platform, SHD has also improved its IT security. “As we expand our cloud services, we also need to sharpen our security processes,” notes Röder. “The VMware vCenter integration with Lenovo XClarity Pro enables us to plan and complete firmware updates across the entire cluster much faster. As a result, our systems are patched and protected against new cyberthreats faster.”

Thanks to Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Series, SHD has also reduced backup times by almost 50%. Previously, a complete backup would run for over 19 hours. Today it takes just 10 hours to ensure business continuity and minimize the risk of data loss.

By taking advantage of the advanced GPU support offered by Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Series, SHD can also offer customers new, more flexible, and cost-efficient solutions to virtualize high-performance workstations for 3D computer-aided design (CAD) modeling and visualization.

Röder concludes: “We are a one-stop shop for our customers and it’s only through our strong partnership with Lenovo that we can offer 360-degree solutions and such a wide range of software products, servers, clients and services. Being an integrated solution provider, we can offer personalized support and solve challenges much faster – making sure that our customers can focus on their business, not their IT. Building on Lenovo ThinkAgile VX, we can deliver a much better service with our SHD Performance Cloud than customers could achieve with their limited in-house resources.”



✓ **Almost 50% faster backups improve business continuity**

✓ **50% lower maintenance workload thanks to integrated and automated management**

✓ **Improved performance enables even smoother customer experience in-store**



“The performance and ease of use of the Lenovo ThinkAgile VX platform has motivated us to rethink our business model. We’re transforming our operations and focusing on the expansion of the SHD Performance Cloud. With Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Series, we can build on our excellent reputation in the furniture retail industry and deliver even more effective solutions to enable furniture and kitchen sales at better service levels and lower cost than most of our customers could achieve with their in-house IT. Our customers benefit from our scale and experience, high availability is our default setup, and all data is backed up safely. With our full-service offerings, we can grow our business faster and continue to lead in our market segment while achieving higher margins and offer new added-value to our customers.”

Stephan Röder

Executive Director and Head of Sales and Organization, SHD Technologie und Service GmbH

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

The Data-Centered put cloud at the heart of growth strategy with Lenovo smarter infrastructure solutions, powered by VMware.

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

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