

**Customer
Case**



Moving IT to the cloud and proactive management boost security and mobility for Intervest

Intervest Offices & Warehouses (Intervest) is a regulated real-estate company that invests in offices and logistical buildings which it then leases out to companies. By completely outsourcing its IT to cloud partner Cheops, Intervest can fully focus on the expansion of its core activities. A good thing, too, as customers increasingly expect a comprehensive service.



“By outsourcing our complete IT infrastructure to Cheops, we no longer have to worry about our servers, the available capacity, security or IT management”, says Luc Feyaerts, COO of Intervest. “We use thin clients and remote desktop services (RDS), so virtually nothing is installed locally these days, meaning there’s next to nothing to be maintained on-premise. Cheops now securely stores our servers and data in their external data centre, and they manage systems remotely. Problems are often resolved before we experience any real difficulties. By proactively removing these concerns, they free us to concentrate on our own core activities: providing services to our customers. Cheops takes over the entire day-to-day management and also shares the responsibility for all IT risks and potential problems.”

All responsibility in the hands of a single IT partner

At its previous company location Intervest had a classic in-house server room. The servers were due for replacement about the same time as the company’s moving plans began to take shape. So it was the perfect moment to give their IT approach a thorough rethink.

“We started asking ourselves whether we really needed our own IT infrastructure after the move”, Luc Feyaerts explains. “Switching to the cloud came to seem like a more interesting alternative. We could simultaneously bundle the whole IT management at a single external partner. We used to work with several suppliers, so when there were problems they would often blame each other. The expertise was also fragmented, which sometimes reduced efficiency. Opting for a single partner who takes charge of the entire IT infrastructure has led to a transfer of risk: we now have a partner we can turn to at all times.”

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Luc Feyaerts, coo of Intervest Offices & Warehouses



A partner at our side

After comparing several potential partners, Cheops was selected because they proposed the solution that best corresponded to Intervest’s needs. Luc Feyaerts: “The approach and attitude of Cheops fit us very well. And they’re located nearby. Although Cheops manages our IT infrastructure remotely, we still consider that a plus, since it permits fast and flexible consultation whenever necessary. Also, as an IT partner they support a lot of SME customers so they are more familiar with the needs of smaller companies.”

All-in service, management and monitoring

Cheops now takes care of the secure storage and management of the data and makes them available in the cloud via a fast connection. Thanks to the central monitoring, Cheops can tackle any problems immediately. A ‘Focus IT’ contract regulates the cooperation between Intervest and Cheops, providing Intervest with overall IT support at a fixed monthly price.

“The contract also gives us access to a central helpdesk we can always contact by email or phone, depending on our SLAs”, Luc Feyaerts explains. “Our contacts at Cheops know our company so we do not have to explain everything all the time, which often happens with larger IT providers. As part of our collaboration we also get together every three months for a service delivery meeting where we discuss the service and Cheops makes suggestions to further optimise our IT.”

No investments in IT expertise and hardware

For Intervest it is the ideal solution: the organisation only has some 40 computer users so it doesn't need an internal IT Manager. "IT specialists are a scarce, expensive resource - and they tend to be job hoppers", says Luc Feyaerts. "Moreover, the technology is evolving so quickly that we prefer to call on an external partner who keeps on top of the latest developments with a whole team. For us this is impossible because nowadays a single person could never acquire all the necessary IT knowledge."

By working via the cloud with flexibly adaptable capacity, Intervest itself also no longer has to invest in expensive hardware. "This will definitely cut costs in the long term although it's hard to say exactly by how much", Luc Feyaerts notes. "Even more important is that we can expect greater efficiency and higher productivity thanks to the active support and the faster resolution of problems."

Protection against external and internal threats

Intervest is listed on the stock exchange so good IT security is very important. Cheops not only assures thorough protection against external threats such as hackers, viruses, spam and phishing, but also organises internal awareness training courses for employees where computer users learn how to use email and the internet safely. "Cheops keeps abreast of the latest threats and is therefore able to prevent problems", says Luc Feyaerts. "A recent audit - which is mandatory for listed companies - revealed that we do well in terms of IT security, so that's one less thing to worry about."

Evolving towards a total service

In recent years Intervest has been increasingly evolving from a property owner to a supplier of a wide range of services. Traditionally, an owner-manager is primarily

occupied with providing services such as organising the cleaning of common areas, technical maintenance, window cleaning, etc. Now this also includes other services such as the complete design and layout of the offices, horeca facilities, a company day care centre, a parcel service, seminar facilities and an ironing service.

Luc Feyaerts: "Just like we expect that Cheops to address all of our IT concerns, more and more of our own customers demand an overall service for their offices, including interior decoration and everything that entails. Our flex offices take this concept to the next level by accommodating customers who want these flexible workstations in order to work alone, with customers or with colleagues. For instance, Cheops also manages the wireless network in these flex offices."

Moreover, for Intervest Cheops also handles the management of all mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets. The Cheops approach combines a mobile policy and proactive management with specialised tools and end user support. "We can now rest assured that all mobile devices - their applications and accompanying data - are being used, managed and supported in a secure manner. This boosts the productivity of our staff and avoids certain risks such as data loss."

Continuity is increasingly important

Intervest's shift to the cloud went smoothly: only a few months passed between the signing of the contract and the actual migration. The transition itself took place without unexpected downtime. Luc Feyaerts: "Naturally, the continuity of our activities is important, and therefore we also set out in SLAs the period within which Cheops has to resolve any problems. For now we are still at the stage where an interruption would not have disastrous consequences - after all, we are not a webshop. If we ourselves should also deliver more IT-related services to our customers at some point in the future, continuity would naturally become much more crucial."



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The Cheops solution

Advantages of the Cheops solution

- more time for core activities
- greater flexibility and efficiency
- solve problems quickly
- higher availability
- proactive management
- good security
- access to broad expertise
- financially interesting
- helpdesk with dedicated contacts

About Intervest Offices & Warehouses

Intervest Offices & Warehouses nv was founded in 1996 and is a public regulated real-estate company whose shares have been listed on Euronext Brussels (INTO) since 1999. In Belgium, Intervest Offices & Warehouses invests in high-quality office buildings and logistical buildings, which are leased to top-of-the-line tenants. The properties invested in are primarily up-to-date buildings situated in strategic locations outside urban centres. The office part of the real estate portfolio focuses on the Antwerp-Mechelen-Brussels axis; the logistical part on the Antwerp-Brussels-Nivelles and Antwerp-Limburg-Liège axes. In the leasing of office space, Intervest Offices & Warehouses sets itself apart by offering 'turnkey solutions', an all-in-one solution ranging from planning, designing and coordinating the activities to budget monitoring. The company employs some 40 people.

www.intervest.be



Cheops Technology nv
Prins Boudewijnlaan 49 - 2650 Edegem - Belgium - T +32 3 880 23 00 - info@cheops.com