Vlerick Business School assures availability of IT infrastructure thanks to outsourced monitoring

Vlerick Business School has fully outsourced the administration and monitoring of its central IT infrastructure to Cheops. As a result, the organisation now has more assurance of continuity and availability. This means it can give its full attention to supporting users and the service for students and participants in their programmes.

cheops

"Since Cheops started managing our IT infrastructure, we haven't had any unplanned downtime," says Jan Van Hyfte, IT Manager at Vlerick Business School. "As an international educational institute, we can't afford that either. Every failure of our IT infrastructure – from the internet connection to data storage – has a major impact on our activities. For example, we use digital learning platforms with teaching materials and interactive exercises, which must be available at all times."
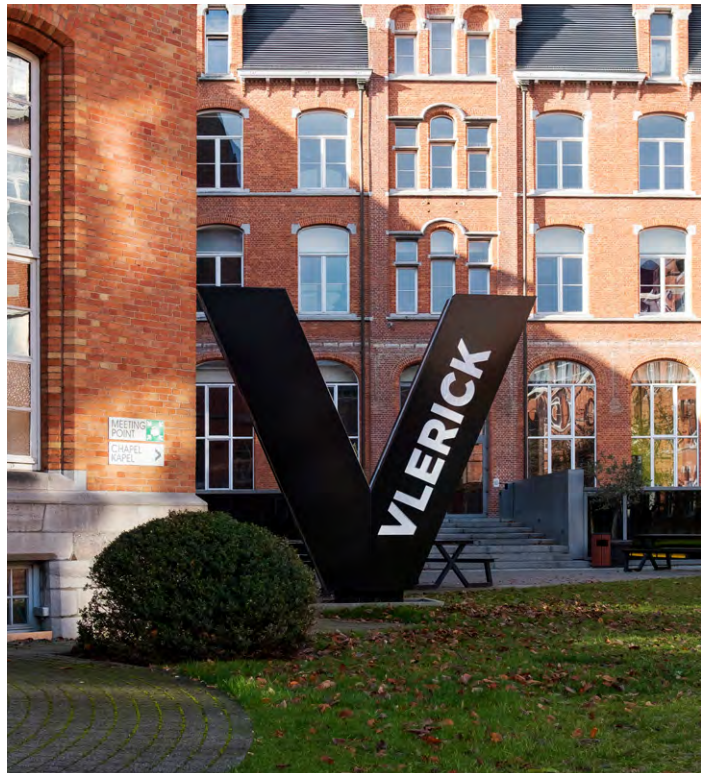
Outsourcing versus hiring IT administrators

When two of the three IT infrastructure administrators left Vlerick, the organisation was faced with the choice of recruiting new people or outsourcing that responsibility. "Our IT department is not that big – about a dozen employees – which sometimes makes it difficult to attract the right people and keep them on board," explains Jan Van Hyfte. "So we decided to outsource. This way we can be sure of continuity and we are always supported by specialists."

The collaboration with Cheops started after a thorough selection procedure. "Cheops clearly understood our needs and delivered a proposal that best met our expectations in terms of service and budget," says Jan Van Hyfte. Afterwards, Cheops also proved to meet these expectations in practice.

Incidents detected and resolved immediately

Cheops now manages the entire central IT infrastructure used by the approximately 200 employees at the three Vlerick campuses. The servers, storage and network are located in Vlerick Business School's own data centre on the campus in Ghent, and are monitored remotely. There are also regular service delivery meetings – physical or online – to discuss the SLAs and the services provided in the previous period.

Jan Van Hyfte: "Since we absolutely must be able to count on the availability of our IT infrastructure, it is crucial that every incident is detected and resolved at the earliest possible stage. That's why we wanted a specialised partner like Cheops. They continuously monitor everything and can solve problems even before the users experience any inconvenience."

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IT support during the weekend

At the start of the corona crisis, employees of Vlerick Business School were forced to switch to teleworking. Fortunately, this was possible without any major difficulties, partly because everyone had just finished a Microsoft Teams training course. So they could get started right away. All that was needed was to increase the number of VPN licences.

"Our IT department also started working full-time from home, still helped by Cheops," says Jan Van Hyfte. "At one point there were problems with our web environment, which is crucial for marketing among other things. The incident happened on a Friday evening and Cheops worked through the weekend so that the website was back online during the weekend. At such moments, you realise what a big advantage it is being able to count on a professional service provider like Cheops. They are organised in such a way that they are also available at night or during the weekend. This is obviously much harder with your own employees. We would never be able to offer such assurance of continuity ourselves."

IT department focuses on the end users

Because the IT employees of Vlerick Business School no longer have to deal with the IT infrastructure themselves, they can fully focus on the applications. So during the corona restrictions they were able to (partially) switch to online lessons. The intention was always to go back to physical teaching afterwards.

"The physical learning experience is well and truly embedded in Vlerick's DNA," explains Jan Van Hyfte. "Usually we teach in auditoria, where the interaction between the participants is very important. They often have very different backgrounds and experiences, which leads to a unique interaction. Our internal employees will probably continue to work from home more now that things have proven to work well."

Evolution to a hybrid cloud environment

In any case, working from home is becoming increasingly easier because the business school is moving to the cloud. "Our users can use more and more software through the cloud," confirms Jan Van Hyfte. "It's not just about Office 365, but also about CRM and other business applications. The backup is already in the cloud. Cheops's tasks are evolving accordingly: ultimately they will monitor our entire hybrid environment, including secure access and the management of users and licences."

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IT Manager at Vlerick Business School

The Cheops solution

Benefits of the Cheops solution

- higher business continuity
- monitoring of central IT infrastructure
- access to IT expertise
- accessibility and open communication
- assurance of continuous support
- greater focus on end users

About Vlerick Business School

Vlerick Business School is an international business school that offers management courses on subjects such as digital transformation, entrepreneurship and innovation, healthcare, energy and financial services. Vlerick Business School has its own campuses in Ghent, Brussels and Leuven and has some 23,000 alumni in more than 100 countries.

www.vlerick.com

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