

## **VAN GENECHTEN EXPANDS IT AND CONTROLS COSTS WITH EDB POSTGRES™**

### **GOALS**

- Streamline and automate packaging processes.
- Achieve an increase in scale in order to support the growing database user group.
- Replace expensive commercial databases with a cost-saving solution that provides enterprise-class stability and functionality.

### **BENEFITS OF EDB POSTGRES**

- EDB Postgres™ Advanced Server provided a cost-effective way to further scale automation with no software license fees or vendor lock-ins.
- EDB allowed for a smooth migration process at scale while providing stability and functionality.
- EDB supported Van Genechten and solved all issues confidently within a very short time frame.
- Achieved better performance for Van Genechten than the commercial major database formerly used.

With a tradition going back to 1834, the Van Genechten Group is one of Belgium's most successful privately owned companies. Its Packaging Division is one of Europe's leading vendors of premium packaging products with production sites in seven countries. In 1975 the Van Genechten Group established Imas as an autonomous subsidiary to run all of its IT-operations.

The packaging industry is characterized by comparatively low profit margins per unit and IT plays a crucial role in enabling Van Genechten Packaging to provide its customers with premium products in a flexible and efficient way against a competitive price. Fulfilling that crucial role, Imas makes it possible for Van Genechten Packaging to win such companies as Unilever and Kraft among its customers.

### **Freedom from Vendor Lock-in**

As the packaging industry is characterized by very specific demands, Imas decided early on to build its own ERP system to

perfectly fit Van Genechten Packaging's needs instead of buying a commercially available ERP system.

Originally designed for use on a mainframe, the database supporting the ERP system was migrated to a commercial enterprise relational database later on. Induced by the global financial crisis, Imas looked for ways to further streamline and automate Van Genechten Packaging's processes. This is why they decided to extend their ERP system from the back office to the production sites.

With the ERP system, the database user group had to grow as well. With significantly more people working in production than in the back office, it soon turned out however that the major database supplier's user-based licensing policy was a major stumbling block: "We did not exactly calculate the extra license fees needed," comments Joris Geuens, project manager at Imas. "But it was soon clear to us that we were speaking about a figure with a lot of zeros."

## High Quality and Open Source

Combined with Imas' engineering skills as well as its preference for industry-standard solutions and for preventing vendor lock-in, the financial stumbling blocks made Geuens and his team look for an open source alternative to expensive commercial databases. As they were looking for enterprise-class functionality and stability it soon turned out that only EDB Postgres™ Advanced Server from EnterpriseDB (EDB) could provide this alternative.

EDB provided Imas specialists with a seven-day training session. Based on what they learned, Imas decided to move forward with the migration to PostgreSQL. The migration took place over five months and went exceptionally well. The migration was prepared by Imas themselves with remote support from EDB and an EDB specialist on site for the phase of going live.



**“No migration at such a scale ran entirely without issues,” said Geuens. “However, we found that EDB supported us with such a drive, we had never experienced from any other vendor, be it proprietary or open source. All issues were solved in a convincing manner and within a very short time frame.”**

Imas made use of the EDB Postgres Migration Toolkit to help with the migration process and currently runs EDB Postgres Advanced Server as well as Postgres Enterprise Manager (PEM).

**“This software does exactly what we want it to do,” said Geuens.**

“When we started, PEM did not provide all the functionality we would have liked. But it worked well for us anyway and the software is developed with such a drive that with the latest version we got everything we wanted from it. And with no software license fees or vendor lock-in getting in the way this upgrade did not cost us anything or forced us to upgrade our hardware.”

The migration project has successfully extended the reach of the ERP system into the production sites. Geuens explained: “our business is characterized by small margins as well as by custom-built products. We do not sell one-size-fits-all products and products have to be changed on a regular basis to fulfill the needs of our customers. Every product and job needs to be calculated and controlled separately. Especially tight controls and feedback between production and the back office are necessary in order to ensure that production costs and pricing are correct and competitive. Without the factory departments being integrated into the ERP system, staff had to manually transfer

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instructions for every job to the production machines and use hand-written forms to report on finished jobs. This was not only inefficient but also error-prone. They can now enter their reports directly into the ERP-system, making the whole process more efficient and accurate.”

### Steps Forward

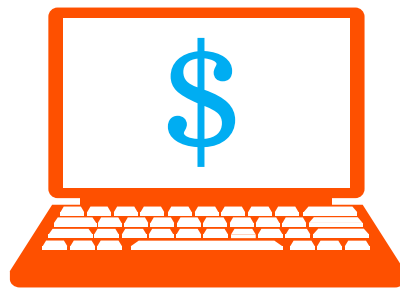
To drive automation even further Joris and his team are currently working on interfaces to directly feed job details from the back office into the printing machines.

**“Traditionally,” explained Geuens, “our production sites have been rather free of IT. With our newest initiative we are driving automation further into the overall process and helping Van Genechten Packaging to keep its competitive edge.**

With the EDB infrastructure safely in place, Geuens is happy that he has a cost-effective way to further scale automation and is also impressed with the system’s performance.

Being a software developer himself he also appreciated the clean way open source software is engineered:

“The new database was running well from the start. However we witnessed rather slow performance in some specific cases. But when we took a closer look we found that all these cases were related to incorrectly written queries. After cleaning up these queries, it turned out the performance was even better than with the commercial major database we used formerly.”



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