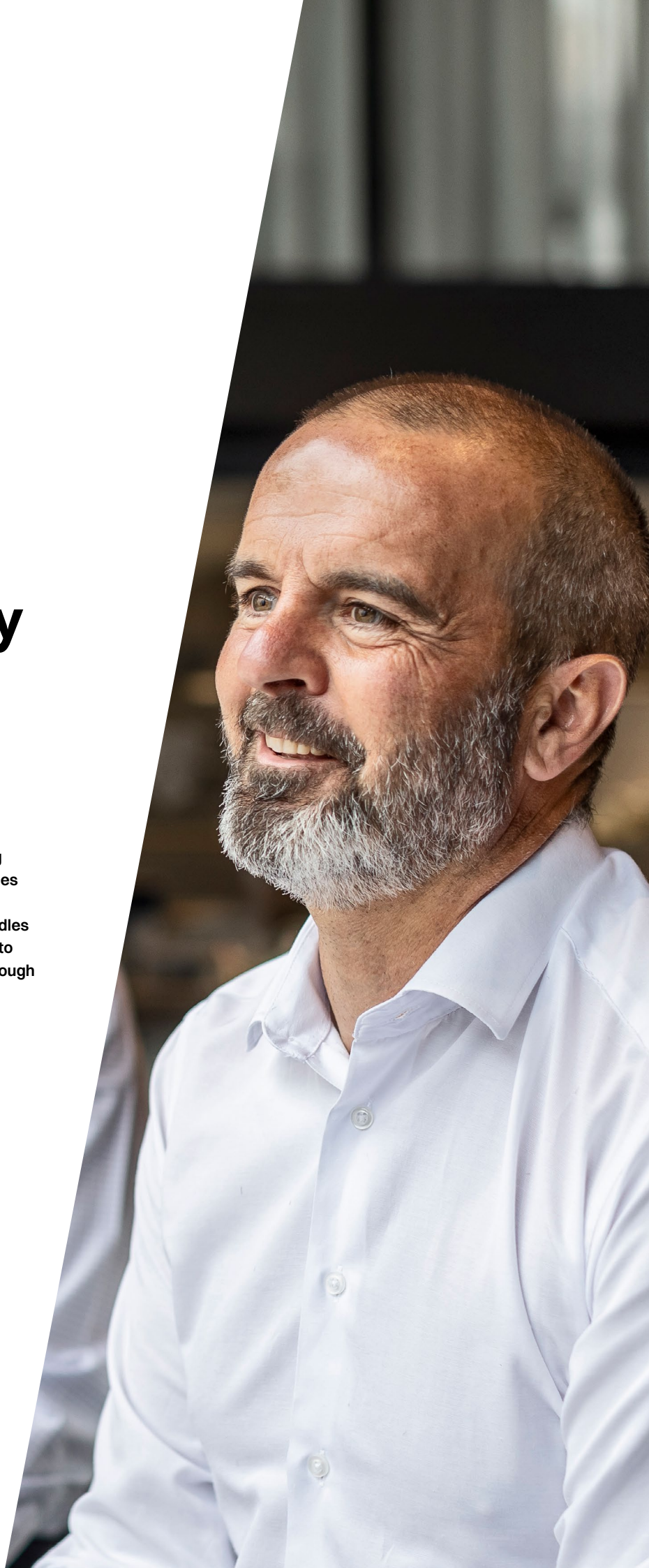**Customer Case**

Alcopa shifts IT to the cloud and completely outsources IT management

Alcopa completely separated the investment holding company's IT environment from its portfolio companies and relocated everything to the Azure cloud. Cheops provided advice, handled the migration and now handles all the IT management, from hardware and software to WiFi, telephony and security awareness training, through Managed Services.

cheops

The migration project at Alcopa was very substantial. It was given the name 'Alcopa IT Transition' for good reason. "That transition was necessary because Alcopa has also gone through a transformation as an organization," says Bruno Bandella, Investment Manager at Alcopa. "We have evolved from an industrial holding company to a more diversified investment holding company. Our portfolio companies now operate independently and we are majority shareholders but not 100% in most cases. Therefore, we wanted to move away from the 'shared service center' with a central IT service that worked only for the holding company and one or two participations."

Building a new IT environment

So Alcopa had to make the holding company's IT environment independent and cut all the links with the other companies. "We managed to do that with Cheops as a partner," says Werner Heyen, Consolidation Manager at Alcopa.

Alcopa listed certain criteria, needs and expectations in advance and looked at offers from different parties. "Cheops turned out to be the best on several levels," explains Bruno Bandella. "In addition, they have their headquarters here near us in Kontich. That wasn't the most important factor, but it is useful that they can come quickly if necessary. But above all, Cheops advised us very well and helped us build our new IT environment."

> " Just like other organizations, we regularly have to deal with phishing emails and other IT threats. That's why we get online instructional videos via Cheops on how to recognize phishing emails."
>
> Bruno Bandella,
> Investment Manager at Alcopa

Switching from own servers to Azure

The solution Cheops worked out was a new infrastructure with migration to another cloud. The entire project was completed in about six months. Cheops migrated Alcopa's entire Office environment from a locally installed version to Office 365 in Microsoft's public cloud. This includes, in addition to the classic office applications such as Word and Excel, extensive possibilities for more efficient collaboration via Teams.

Key applications managed in the cloud

Moreover, Alcopa's consolidation software and financial reporting are now also in the cloud, where they are managed by Cheops. "That software is very important for managing the entire group and must of course always be 'up & running', otherwise we can't do our job," Werner Heyen says.

In addition to the software migration, Cheops also arranged the purchase and configuration of new laptops, the network, the Wi-Fi and the installation of cameras and video systems in the meeting rooms.

Online collaboration

"Our move to the independent infrastructure was around in 2019. Coincidentally, this also meant we were already prepared for the covid pandemic," notes Bruno Bandella. "Since our entire IT environment is accessible online, we were able to continue working, communicating and collaborating very easily when we were unable to come to the office."

"Working from home didn't happen systematically before, however," adds Werner Heyen. "But now that we have discovered that it is possible without any problems, it has become a new habit for the roles where it is possible."

Peace of mind thanks to Managed Services

Alcopa employs mainly financial specialists. There is no in-house IT department. "We therefore have little specific IT expertise. That's why we rely completely on the advice of Cheops. They have all the expertise in-house, so we were able to outsource all the management and support to their Managed Services. That gives us enormous peace of mind" says Werner Heyen.

"It's not an easy task to decentralize a central IT infrastructure," says Werner Heyen. "Yet everything went very smoothly. Cheops supervised the entire project. It was a plus for us that they themselves are not a very large organization: therefore, they were perfectly able to provide a solution that was ideal for our size. It also made the collaboration easier and more personal. Everything quickly felt very familiar, and we can always count on our dedicated contact persons."

IT management fully outsourced

"Cheops is responsible for all our IT, from a to z," confirms Werner Heyen. "When a new employee comes on board, they take care of creating an e-mail address, setting up access rights and installing a PC, for example. We don't have to manage anything ourselves and Cheops is our only point of contact for IT. That works most efficiently. They are perfectly informed and they guarantee continuity. We have

also concluded a Service Level Agreement that determines the time frame within which they respond to questions or problems. We discuss the service reports during our 'service delivery meetings'. Cheops can easily drop by but the support is largely done remotely."

Telephony in the cloud

Since the decentralization of IT, a number of additional IT projects have already been done by Cheops at Alcopa. For example, telephony now runs entirely through the cloud. With the help of Cheops, Alcopa switched from a local telephone system to a Teams direct routing solution. " By doing so, we will be able to collaborate even more flexibly through Teams," expects Bruno Bandella.

Learning to recognize phishing emails

Another important project was the Security Awareness Training at Cheops, to make employees aware of security threats. "Just like other organizations, we regularly have to deal with phishing emails and other IT threats," says Werner Heyen. "We also see that these problems are becoming more widespread. That's why we get online instructional videos via Cheops on how to recognize phishing emails, for example. We also receive fake messages to check whether we are indeed more alert and don't just click anything. The training runs for at least two years and we can always refresh it after that, because this is something you have to keep focusing on."

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Werner Heyen,
Consolidation Manager at Alcopa

The Cheops solution

Advantages of the Cheops solution

- greater continuity and flexibility
- access to extensive IT expertise
- fixed contact for all IT
- peace of mind and focus on own business
- guaranteed support
- better collaboration in the cloud

About Alcopa

Alcopa is an investment company headquartered in Belgium, founded in 1937. Over the years, the company grew from a car manufacturer to a diversified holding company that invests in private companies in Western Europe. Alcopa now has ten shareholdings.

www.alcopa.be