

How Cheops translates logistics expertise into results at Haeger & Schmidt Logistics Belgium

For the last 15 years, Haeger & Schmidt Logistics Belgium has been able to rely on Cheops, a managed services provider with in-depth expertise in the logistics sector. The structural support Cheops has offered to the IT manager at this logistics service provider includes both managed services and IT experts. The result has been there, with guaranteed business continuity and security. As a strategic partner and sounding board, Cheops has also provided future-proof advice on new developments.



Haeger & Schmidt Logistics Belgium, based in Antwerp, specialises in logistics services. They focus on inland waterway and rail, general cargo handling and international forwarding, particularly for steel products. IT of course plays a critical role in the daily operations of any logistics company. The company used to be part of the logistics arm of Belgian railway company NMBS, which meant they could rely on their IT department.

But after the company was sold to Felbermayr, they had to start handling their own IT. They initially worked with local servers, which were later transferred to data centres. IT, quality & customs manager Frederik Ringoot was solely responsible for IT at Haeger & Schmidt Logistics Belgium in those early days, which quickly became a complex task. So, he decided to seek out the support of a managed services provider to support him. This led him to Cheops following a benchmarking exercise in 2011. "From the very first conversation, I had a good feeling about Cheops. We immediately worked really well together."

System availability is a top priority for the logistics service provider. "We cannot afford to be down for an entire day," emphasises Ringoot. "That's why, after several years of working together, we decided to switch to Cheops Managed Services to ensure that continuity. We noticed that it improved usability for our employees too."

Ringoot believes that switching to managed services made their IT costs much more predictable: "Every year I have to put together a budget. The predictability provided by managed services gives me the confidence to invest more consciously and align IT decisions with our long-term objectives. Cheops also manages our licences, which means I have a clear overview of what we are using."

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On the workflow

Today, Cheops proactively manages Haeger & Schmid Logistics Belgium's server and network infrastructure, as well as end users' IT equipment. Using the Cheops Business Technology Platform, Cheops continuously monitors and optimises the company's IT environment, meaning that potential incidents are detected early and, in many cases, completely avoided. This results in higher availability and minimal downtime.

The same proactive approach applies to end users. If they have questions or need specific support, they can always turn to the Cheops service desk for quick and targeted assistance. "Even though this resolves their problems quickly, some employees prefer on-site support," says Ringoot. "I also needed support with day-to-day IT tasks, so we decided to bring on board a Cheops IT expert through their professional services."

Cheops IT expert Luca Dombret has been working as a senior support engineer at Haeger & Schmidt Logistics Belgium for three years now and plays a key role in Cheops' proactive service. "While the Cheops platform helps prevent a lot of incidents, I support end users with their day-to-day questions and help with operational optimisation, for example by onboarding employees, simplifying processes and preparing documentation."

The advantage of bringing on board Cheops IT experts is that they receive ongoing training and are up to speed with the latest technology trends, without Haeger & Schmidt Logistics Belgium having to invest in this themselves.

Ringoot believes that the combination of managed services and professional services from Cheops offers clear added value: "With managed services, Cheops does a lot of the work behind the scenes. Working in parallel, Luca knows 95% of our infrastructure. If I have a problem or need help with something, there is always someone on-site. That is invaluable."

The logistics sector is in the middle of a digital transformation. In the past a lot of transport documents were processed on paper, but this is now becoming more and more digital as a result of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). "All our outgoing documents use EDI standards," says Ringoot. However, not all Haeger & Schmidt Logistics Belgium customers, often large steel manufacturers, have digitised their processes. "To make things easier for our employees, I started automating processes to handle customer information more efficiently," adds Dombret.

Secure configuration

Security is of course a key area of investment for Haeger & Schmidt Logistics Belgium. "The security measures taken by Cheops, including on all laptops, put my IT manager's mind much more at ease," says Ringoot. The entire supply chain is an important focus here, he adds: "Our customers are connected to our systems, which means potential security risks. As a strategic partner, Cheops has also provided us with advice on this."

Security is essential to managed services, as endpoint detection and response forms an integral part of the service. This is monitored around the clock by a team of experts. The Microsoft Secure Score - an analysis tool in the Microsoft Defender portal that measures an organisation's security status - was also used. "We went from a score of 41% to 72%," says Dombret. "This was mainly the result of a series of targeted optimisations, such as correctly configuring sharing and screen recording settings in Teams meetings."

Move to the cloud

In 2019, Haeger & Schmidt Logistics Belgium started moving to the cloud, including Microsoft Office 365 and Teams. "This meant that during the Covid pandemic, the company was already fully set up for remote working," emphasises Ringoot. "Although employees were initially hesitant, the Covid pandemic significantly accelerated that change in way of working."

Last year, Haeger & Schmidt Logistics Belgium migrated their Oracle environment to Oracle Cloud. Cheops provided support during this complex migration, as well as with integration with the Windows environment and security. "We now have the highest possible level of security," says Ringoot. Today, virtually everything runs in the cloud or in a Cheops data centre, with the exception of a limited amount of local storage.

Strategic partner

Over their 15 years of collaboration with Haeger & Schmidt Logistics Belgium and other clients in the logistics sector, Cheops has built up in-depth knowledge of the industry. "Whether it's related to customs processes, automating transport documents, or IT security, thanks to

their expertise in our sector, Cheops understands the impact on our company," says Ringoot. He gives a concrete example: "When the NIS2 regulations came into effect, our account manager reviewed the impact on our organisation with me, as well as with our managing director."

These kinds of conversations with Cheops specialists are crucial to carefully aligning the managed services provided with the company's needs. "Cheops also proactively brings new developments to our attention, for example when our security level evolves," says Ringoot. It's why he considers Cheops a strategic partner and sounding board: "I am currently working on an AI policy for our employees and have asked Cheops to review it. I know I can always turn to them for IT advice."

Haeger & Schmidt Logistics Belgium's IT manager is also full of praise for the continuity of their collaboration: "The engineers at Cheops know our systems inside out by now. If a problem arises, they know exactly what to do. Combined with professional services, that gives me real peace of mind: I can go on holiday without worrying, because I know I can count on Luca."



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The Cheops solution

Advantages:



Predictable IT spending



Guaranteed business continuity



The highest possible level of security



Strategic advice

About Haeger & Schmidt Logistics Belgium

Haeger & Schmidt Logistics Belgium specialises in logistics services, multimodal transport solutions, and the storage of dry goods, primarily steel products. The company has 32 employees, is based in Antwerp and is part of Felbermayr.

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