



Foto: Linke

In Conversation: Günter Heppes

Interview with Günter Heppes, Director of IT Systems at Bartels-Langness Handelsgesellschaft mbH & Co KG, Kiel

The monitoring system "Chief" created by the Gedos company significantly reduces the amount of manual work involved in the daily business life of employees and gives them security running the application processes in the computer center. Günter Heppes talks about his company's experiences using Chief.

MaK DataNews: Mr. Heppes, what does Bela do?

Günter Heppes: Bela is a group of companies involved in wholesale as well as retail sales and distribution of food stuffs.

MaK DataNews: What is the Chief system used for?

Günter Heppes: Chief is used in the computer center for monitoring the decentralized Unix computers and

the central mainframe.

MaK DataNews: Why did you select Chief and not some other product?

Günter Heppes: We were convinced by the performance and efficiency of the Chief system.

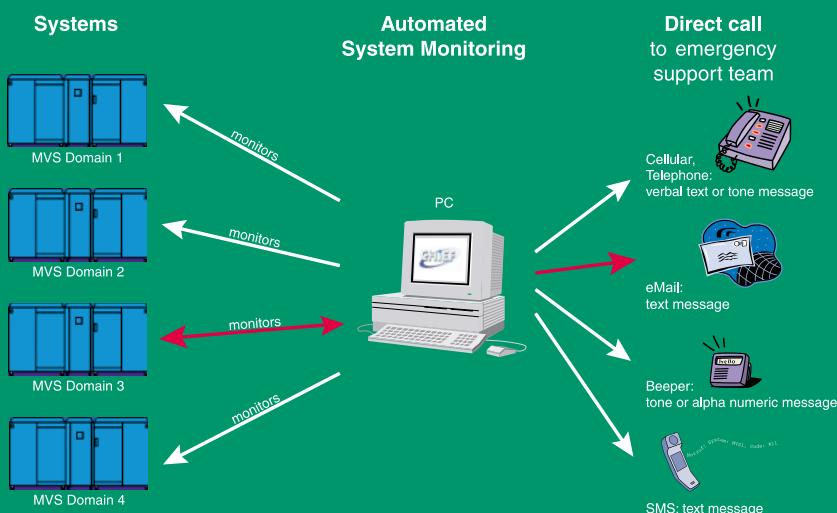
MaK DataNews: What does Chief do?

Günter Heppes: On the one hand, Chief monitors the running programs

of the individual computers and checks the return codes, that is, the results. It sends out messages if the return codes contain any errors and informs the persons responsible for the relevant tasks. On the other hand, Chief searches the protocol files for certain errors, which are then passed on to the relevant work stations via e-mail.

MaK DataNews: When did you install Chief?

Chief is watching – Alarm Manager for IT Systems



All host and server systems (MVS, OS/390, VM/VSE, OS400, BS2000, OSD, Unix, Linux, WIN NT/2000, Netware) and applications systems, such as SAP R/3 can be automatically controlled and monitored by the systems manager and warning system, Chief, which has been in place in many companies for years. In addition, Chief can conveniently warn the appropriate person, when necessary.

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Easing the Burden of Employees in IT around the Clock

Günter Heppes: About a year ago and it has been in operation since then.

MaK Data\News: What experiences have you had with Chief?

Günter Heppes: We have had very positive experiences as well as a few negative ones. First, the positive experiences: It is clearly through the use of Chief that we are able to much better identify errors that arise or rather specific defects which present themselves in the form of protocol files. We can then easily fix these problems.

This is a major advantage, especially, considering the large number of computers that have to be monitored.

MaK Data\News: How many computers do you monitor with Chief?

Günter Heppes: Chief presently monitors 80 computers.

MaK Data\News: And the computers are located in all your stores?

Günter Heppes: The computers are located in the stores and deal with tasks regarding the inventory planning and control in those locations.

MaK Data\News: Let's go back to your experiences with Chief.

Günter Heppes: With Chief, we are able to send error messages directly to the computers of the respective

employees who can directly correct the errors.

Additionally, we save ourselves the awkward task of working with manually created lists with the details of these errors. We no longer receive faxes containing error messages which then have to be correspondingly assessed. This was how the systems at the individual locations were monitored before Chief was installed - a very costly and complicated process.

We are able to detect the errors that have occurred on the monitored computers much earlier. For example, in the area of data transfer: Chief allows us to check the transfer of data from and to corresponding computers, allowing us to determine, much earlier, if the files have not arrived at their proper destination. Chief is partly capable of starting the appropriate programs itself so that the errors are not only made visible but can also be directly corrected by Chief.

MaK Data\News: So that no one even needs to come to fix the problem?

Günter Heppes: Partly, so that no one needs to come but even if some one was there, he/she would not have to deal with the problem himself/herself. Therefore, Chief is not only used during the night but also in the day. So, really 24 hours a day.

MaK Data\News: How many Bela employees are involved in making sure that systems function properly?

Günter Heppes: There are twelve people who belong to the system monitoring team whose responsibility it is, in one way or another, to ensure that the systems function properly.

MaK Data\News: Also on the weekend?

Günter Heppes: Of course, there are less on the weekend. Then, there is only one person in charge of an emergency service.

MaK Data\News: Earlier on, you also mentioned negative experiences with Chief. What type of negative experiences have you had?

Günter Heppes: There are actually two things: One is the stability of the main operating system (Windows NT) which is in need of reworking. Secondly, that the system is still not capable of monitoring NT computers.

MaK Data\News: What does the cost-benefit ratio look like?

Günter Heppes: I would prefer not to quote any specific numbers concerning cost-benefit ratio. But I can say that Chief has especially demonstrated its benefits in one particular phase: We can determine errors or problems considerably faster and also more accurately than in the past, when we had to perform the work

Business Group Bartels-Langness Handelsgesellschaft mbH & Co KG, a Private Limited Company & Limited Partnership

manually. And of course, speed now plays a very important roll in the world of EDP.

MaK DataNews: What does the future hold in store for Chief?

Günter Heppes: We will continue to expand Chief. At the moment, we are in a third round, that is, a third phase in Chief. We are working on the integration into the monitoring system, of those errors which, up till now, can still only be detected manually, and then making this information available through short text messaging, direct automation via SMS.

MaK Data/News: Mr. Heppes, thank you very much for the interview. ■

Interview by Corinna Linke.

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Bartels-Langness, "Bela" for short, is a modern and extended company located in Schleswig-Holstein.

More than one hundred years ago, the businessman Hermann D. Langness founded his first wholesale business and laid the foundation for the family business. During the time of the Weimar republic, the Paul Bartels wholesale firm became an associated partner of the company which then became known as "Bartels-Langness".

In 1954, Bela became one of the founding members of the national, independent retail sales chain A&O, which is known today as Markant/Your Chain. The company's logistics are managed from a central storage facility in Neumünster and a fresh food warehouse in Gleschendorf. After German reunification, Bela expanded their business region to include parts of the new federal states. The newly built central storage facility in Wittenhagen, near Stralsund, enables the quick and reliable

supply of goods to customers in the Eastern part of Germany, which has gradually developed into an important business sector for the company.

Their extensive presence in North German regions is one of the company's major strengths. Regional and individual customer requests are filled quickly and easily due to the smooth logistics, regional purchasing and concentrated transportation network. The well-balanced price policy and well-trained customer service department are additional cornerstones of the company's successful marketing strategy.

At present, Bela faithfully delivers to 1,250 retail stores, more than 250 gas stations as well as the over 110 branches of the Famila, Magnet and Markant stores.

Internet: www.bela.de

