# Press release

## Nature & Découvertes migrates its information system to Hardis Group's private cloud

**By choosing the cloud, the chain has reduced the cost of operating its IT infrastructure by 25%, while at the same time making it more up-to-date, evolutive and secure.**

Grenoble, September 24, 2014 – Hardis Group, a digital services company and business software publisher, announces that Nature & Découvertes has migrated all its business applications to its private cloud. The decision to outsource the management of its IT infrastructure was taken as part of the strategic move to refocus its IT department on the business applications, which create more value for the chain than does operating IT. The company took advantage of an overhaul of its applications, and in particular of the replacement of its in-house ERP by SAP Hana, to move to the Cloud.

### An aging and not very evolutive information system

Established in 1990, Nature & Découvertes offers customers of all ages a selection of original, quality products enabling them to discover and be inspired by nature. Its product offering is centered on outdoor group and family activities, wellbeing, flavors, jewelry, books and children's games and toys. Since 1994, Nature & Découvertes has plowed back part of its profits to its Foundation, which supports associations' projects for the protection of biodiversity, education and other contributions to society. The retailer has 1,100 employees spread among its headquarters at Toussus-le-Noble, a small town in the department of Yvelines, just 20 miles west of Paris, and its 83 stores in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany and Luxembourg. Its annual sales are €167 million.

Until 2012, Nature & Découvertes' employees basically relied on applications developed and hosted in-house to perform their duties. However the information system's limitations were becoming increasingly evident in terms of its evolutive capabilities in the context of the chain's strategy of international expansion and the need to improve the handling of cross-channel processes. Additionally, given the small size of the IT department, which had just a dozen employees, there was scope for improving the level of service: the stores' IT systems need to be operational six days out of seven without fail, and the e-commerce site has to be available 24/7 all year round.

### Complete overhaul of organization, retail processes and information system

On the arrival of Josselin Ollier to the post of CIO in 2012, a new IT blueprint was launched, composed of two dimensions: organizational and technological. *"We decided to continue with in-house management of the business aspects that created value for the company, and to outsource the rest".*
Thus it was decided to deploy a new ERP (SAP Hana) so as to be able to implement more modern retail processes to provide more accurate management of the activity, to overhaul the office equipment and its associated tools (SaaS/Office 365 messaging and SharePoint intranet), to renew the IT infrastructure (network and servers) and to entrust their operation to a third party.

The decision to migrate all the business applications (ERP, CRM, BI, etc.) to a private Cloud - or to acquire SaaS applications - was guided by the following objectives: *"We owed it to ourselves to construct an effective, flexible base that was capable of supporting the SAP Hana ERP and the evolved versions of our information system. At the same time, we wanted to reduce the cost of operating the infrastructure. Lastly, we didn't have all the necessary skills to be able to manage the new environments properly with the arrival of these new technologies,"* says Josselin Ollier.

**Hardis Group's private Cloud offering: the best price/performance ratio**
The CIO then set out in search of a provider capable of putting in place the necessary infrastructure to host the new ERP and the other business applications and of operating them day-to-day. After studying offers from three companies, at the beginning of 2013 the company decided to engage Hardis Group: *"Hardis made the best financial offer. But we were really looking for a partner, not just a provider. And in Hardis we found a partner we could talk to, who stays close to its clients and reacts to their requests,"* explains the CIO.

In 24 months, the entire blueprint will have been completed. The new ERP will be operational in May 2015, and will support the new retail processes defined by the company's various divisions. The network has been completely overhauled so as to be able to absorb the traffic among the workstations, the in-store cash/POS systems and the servers hosted in Hardis Group's private Cloud. All the infrastructure needed for the proper functioning of the business applications has been put in place and commissioned by Hardis Group teams.

**An IT department based on the business and on value creation**
All Nature & Découvertes' objectives have been attained. The outsourcing has enabled the chain to reduce the cost of operating its IT infrastructure by 25%, while at the same time improving service quality and security, the applications being hosted in purpose-built facilities with in-built redundancy. *"The private Cloud offers an attractive degree of flexibility: before, the dimensions of our infrastructure were determined by the need to cater to Christmas peak loads, when we need five times as much capacity as in the rest of the year. Now, we only need a few hours to boost capacity,"* observes Josselin Ollier.

In parallel with this, the IT department has evolved toward greater value creation: Hardis Group's teams take care of day-to-day running, which leaves the IT teams free to concentrate on the business. *"The people who used to be in charge of operation have seen their responsibilities evolve toward managing our provider partnerships and planning future developments, while at the same time specializing in our SAP Hana ERP, the company's value chain,"* explains the CIO. They rely largely on scorecards provided by Hardis Group, which allow them to view disk usage, available server power, SLAs, etc. The IT team has also added business line experts, and by year-end the IT division will number 14 persons.

And the comprehensive information system overhaul is not over yet. At present, Nature & Découvertes is completely rethinking the flow of merchandise. It plans soon to implement an off-the-shelf CRM system to provide a cross-channel view of its clients.

**About Hardis Group**

Hardis Group was created in 1984. It is both a software publisher and an IT consulting and services company. The company offers businesses overall support in carrying out their digital transformation, from defining their digital services strategy through to their IT development and integration with existing information systems.

Its offering is organized around four activities: supply chain performance, IT transformation management, digitization of services and optimization of the customer experience. It is based on Hardis' historical business lines: consultancy and project management support; development, third-party application maintenance (TPAM) and integration; facilities management and Cloud; software publisher and decision-maker. It is aimed mainly at the insurance, logistics and retail and industrial transport sectors.

For 30 years the company has based its growth on a pragmatic approach and on values of proximity and strong commitment, both with its 2,500 clients and with its 630 employees (25% of whom are shareholders). Hardis Group posted turnover figures of €57.2 million in 2013. The Group, whose headquarters are in Grenoble, has four other agencies in Lyon, Paris, Lille and Nantes.
www.hardis.fr

**Press contacts**

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| Anjuna | Hardis Group |
| Elodie Cassar | Hélène Leclercq |
| elodie.cassar@anjuna.fr | helene.leclercq@hardis.fr |
| Tel. +33 9 64 15 31 27 | Tel. +33 4 76 70 98 41 |
| GSM: +33 6 80 53 82 94 | |