**Hewlett Packard Enterprise**

# Pushing the possibilities of engineering excellence

## Ceratec is driving innovation across the engineering industry through digital workflows

The global manufacturing and construction industry wants to lower engineering costs, accelerate build times, and work more sustainably. Ceratec, a Belgian technology group with roots in brickmaking, is embracing digital workflows to explore new possibilities around materials, processes, and a mechatronic project-driven approach.

## Pushing the possibilities of engineering excellence

Mechanical engineering has long pushed the boundaries of science and industry. Advances in each have led to great leaps forward in the size, speed, and affordability of construction projects. We are likely on the cusp of the next generational shift. AI, digital twins, the Internet of Things, and innovation in materials all promise to transform the built environment.

At the forefront of these industrial innovations is Ceratec. The Belgian business dates back nearly 40 years and started back in the days as the maintenance department of a brick manufacturer. Soon, the small team began developing and selling its own machines and technology. Today, Ceratec is a €142 million group, active worldwide, employing 500 people. It spans electrical and mechanical engineering, industrial automation, fully automated intralogistics solutions, and production lines for construction materials.

This intentional diversification enables Ceratec to create a full service to the industry, and continuously adapt to changing market needs. It recognizes the future of the industry is smart and interconnected. As such, Ceratec is pushing the boundaries of what is possible in terms of materials and processes. The transformation of the business has been achieved through internal reorganization and acquisition.

"Ceratec is a family-owned business, and the family is entrepreneurial," says Kris Maelbrancke, ICT manager, Ceratec. "If they see an opportunity to grow, they will take it."

**CERATEC®**
**IT'S ALL IN OUR POWER.**

**Industry:** Engineering, manufacturing, construction
**Country:** Belgium

**Vision**

Accelerate digital transformation and explore Industry 4.0 opportunities across the global, diversified engineering group

**Strategy**

Standardize systems and processes, creating a common approach to data storage and product lifecycle management

**Outcomes**

- Enables a real-time view of Ceratec's global operations
- Streamlines IT management allowing focus on new, digital growth opportunities
- Improves productivity with increased application performance for engineering team

## Establishing common standards across a diverse business

For Maelbrancke and his IT team of seven, the task is to knit together diverse business units and create the foundations for a scalable, consistent IT infrastructure. Today, Ceratec has specialized engineering offices, assembly and finishing zones, and warehouses holding more than 19,000 products in stock. It has its own transport facilities and service teams for on-site installation. From a local brickmaker in Belgium, Ceratec now has 500 employees and operates all over the world.

The goal is for each of these elements to be digitalized, enabling a real-time view of Ceratec's operations. "As we evolve, we want to standardize and push further in our mechatronic approach," says Maelbrancke. "By necessity, we have different software in the engineering or mechanical departments, but we want to centralize all data in one product lifecycle management (PLM) system."

A common, more relevant PLM will allow Ceratec to share insights from different parts of the business. At the same time, Ceratec is exploring new ideas around Industry 4.0; this may involve sensors collecting data from customer sites. Customers will be able to view real-time project progress and technical data on-site, from a mobile device.

"At heart, we are a project-led business," says Maelbrancke. "The closer we are to our customers and the industry, the better able we are to develop new solutions and machines."

Today, 95% of all Ceratec data is kept on-premises, but there is growing acceptance of a cloud future. For now, ensuring a cloud-like experience across the IT infrastructure—scalable, transparent use of resources and common management tools—is the priority. Equally important, Maelbrancke explains, is that IT workloads should be streamlined:

"We want foundations that provide us with the speed and capacity to cope with future growth, but this infrastructure has to be easy for us to manage and secure enough to hold customer data and our design IP."

## Improving application performance, strengthening uptime

Ceratec's long-term compute and storage foundations are based on HPE GreenLake for Block Storage built on HPE Alletra Storage MP, and HPE ProLiant Gen 11 Servers. It is the latest evolution of Ceratec's engagement with Hewlett Packard Enterprise.

Managed through the HPE GreenLake cloud, the storage upgrade brings an on-premises cloud experience, efficient scale, and extreme resiliency. HPE ProLiant DL380 Gen11 Servers accelerate the performance of Ceratec's mission-critical workloads. In combination, this translates to fewer glitches in application performance and more uptime, providing momentum to the digitalization of the business.

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"The reaction from users has been excellent," says Maelbrancke, "particularly in the engineering department where they're using heavy 3D-drawing files. Everything is much faster."

"From our side, moving to HPE GreenLake starts to bring everything into one environment. Having a centralized system allows us to see everything. This is a big advantage."

Centralizing data and workloads will make it easier for the business to identify new opportunities or adapt existing technology into a bespoke service for customers. From a sustainability perspective, HPE GreenLake enables Ceratec to provision IT resources more accurately, with less unused capacity.
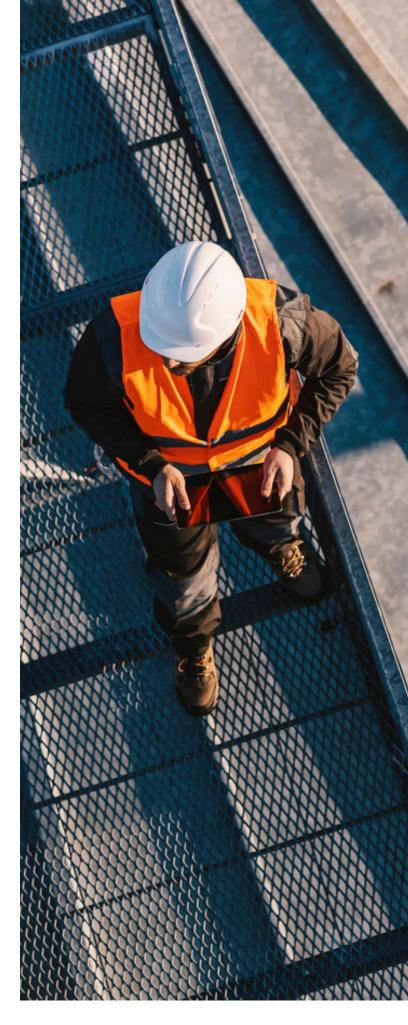
With a 25 GB Fibre Channel and a 100 GB backbone, the connection between the two Ceratec data centers is faster. Corporate data is now more secure; it is easier for Ceratec to restore by reverting to a snapshot, and there is capacity for encrypted copies. Ceratec is better equipped to capture, store, and move data around its global operations.

Working alongside its long-term IT partner, Savaco Holding, Maelbrancke says the potential of HPE Alletra Storage MP was clear: "With its consumption model and cloud-native features, it was clear to us that HPE Alletra Storage MP was the future. Our feeling was that we didn't want to miss the boat, but could it work for a small business? One of the most pleasing aspects of this project has been how straightforward the migration was and how clear the impact has been."

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## Explore more

[HPE.com/us/en/alletra-storage-mp-b10000.html](HPE.com/us/en/alletra-storage-mp-b10000.html)

## Solution

### HPE Hardware

- HPE Alletra Storage MP B10000 (formerly branded as HPE GreenLake for Block Storage)
- HPE ProLiant DL380 Gen11 Servers

### Key partners

- Savaco Holding

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