Case Studies

Customers Gain Competitive Advantage with Infinidat's Enterprise Storage Solutions
Eric Herzog

Biography

Eric Herzog is the Chief Marketing Officer at Infinidat (https://www.infinidat.com). Prior to joining Infinidat, Herzog was Chief Marketing Office and Vice President of Global Storage Channels at IBM Storage Solutions.

His executive leadership experience also includes: CMO and Senior VP of Alliances for all-flash storage provider Violin Memory, and Senior Vice President of Product Management and Product Marketing for EMC's Enterprise & Mid-range Systems Division.

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Abstract
Customers who feel they are being listened to, and presented with choices which are right for them, at the right time, are the customers who will spend more, exhibit deeper loyalty, and help create an environment that generates higher levels of employee engagement. But to do this, relies on technology, and with data storage very much viewed as a cost centre, increases in data consumption, sub-millisecond application performance requirements, resiliency, and the need to do more with less is changing everything, explains the author of this article.

Introduction
Cost savings, performance improvement, and 100% availability with zero downtime are hallmarks of Infinidat's enterprise storage solutions. Together, these attributes give Infinidat's customers the one thing that creates significant business value – competitive advantage.

Petco
The retail industry, and especially the pet care segment, faces numerous technology challenges today, including engaging customers across many different channels, maintaining customer loyalty, translating data analytics into better

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customer experiences, and achieving process and cost efficiencies.   For example, Petco's strategy for creating market-leading customer experiences relies on improving the speed, performance, reliability and cost-efficiency of its IT infrastructure.   As a leader in the $90+ billion pet care and wellness products marketplace, Petco's deployment of Infinidat's storage platforms into Petco's data centres has enabled better pet-parent experiences, providing the company with a very strong competitive advantage.

"Everything we do is focused on creating better experiences for pet parents," explains Hanuman Yalamanchi, Manager of Petco's core IT infrastructure. "When customers visit our stores or online businesses, we earn their loyalty by anticipating their needs and creating a more fulfilling experience. Among Petco's industry differentiators are removing pet food with artificial ingredients from its shelves, providing high-quality and affordable veterinary care at veterinary clinics, full-service hospitals located in their Petco locations, and offering fresh, nutritionally balanced and 100% humangrade meals for dogs."

When Petco's IT team set out to upgrade its infrastructure four years ago, they were seeking an innovative partner with a creative approach to meeting the company's current and future needs. At the time, according to Hanuman, many conventional storage vendors were resting on their laurels and were less than responsive to their customers' unique needs. Infinidat offered a fundamentally new approach to storage technology and support. "Upgrading every three years is not economically feasible for our business. Infinidat exceeded our top criteria, which included scalability, ease of implementation and management, and high availability/reliability at a lower TCO."
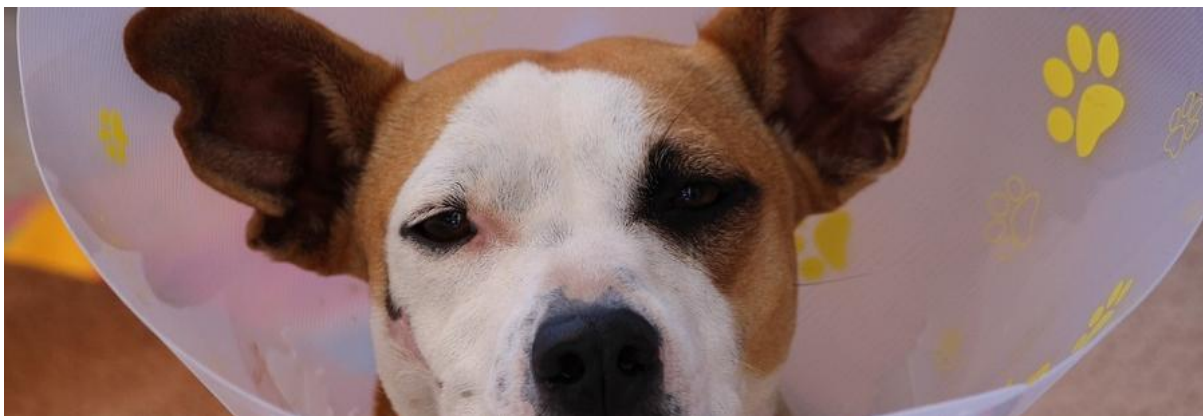
The Infinidat solution enabled the company to substantially lower their CAPEX and OPEX. By deploying Infinidat's award-winning storage technology, Petco obtained 100% availability with zero downtime, as well as high reliability and scalability.

Hanuman reports that Infinidat has been an excellent business partner. "We have experienced no downtime in three years as a result of the redundancies Infinidat builds into its systems, and their support has been extremely proactive. Recently,

we had a performance issue on an application. They immediately identified that the I/O was under two milliseconds and helped us diagnose the root cause that same day. We rely on predictive analytics from the InfiniMetrics platform to identify potential performance bottlenecks in our storage network infrastructure, find and reclaim capacity from dormant volumes, and simplify resource planning – and they do this at far lower cost than other systems."

Today, most of Petco's core business systems run on four InfiniBox® enterprise storage arrays in multiple data centres. The company's selection of Infinidat was much more intensive than just throwing bird seed to the wind. For the evolution of its enterprise storage infrastructure, Petco had stringent requirements to significantly improve speed, performance, reliability, and cost efficiency. Infinidat met the criteria.

Digitization has transformed traditional companies such as Petco into data-centric operations with core business applications and systems requiring high availability and zero downtime.

Salem Five Bank

Likewise, another company that values the competitive edge that Infinidat's storage solutions delivers is Salem Five Bank, a full-service financial services corporation.

This bank needed to upgrade its enterprise storage infrastructure as part of a major upgrade of online banking applications with a third-party provider. They wanted to improve operational efficiency (for instance, virtualized systems, databases, business workloads, etc) and only pay for storage as needed.

Salem Five ended up banking on Infinidat for its enterprise storage because InfiniBox is an extremely reliable platform that self-optimizes performance. Infinidat provided unmatched performance, availability, flexibility, and lower total cost of ownership that the bank needed to maintain their edge in the marketplace. They were a marked improvement over the previous, legacy storage technologies that the bank had been using.

The bank secured 100% availability with zero downtime, along with frictionless scalability. Furthermore, Infinidat provided Salem Five with a cloud-like flexible consumption model. While Salem Five's personal touch uncomplicates banking for consumers, Infinidat simplified storage for the bank while improving performance, reliability and cost savings, as well as providing white glove personalized service.

Founded in 1855, when it was known as "Salem Five Cents Savings Bank" due to its minimum deposit of 5 cents, Salem Five is now one of the largest banks in Massachusetts, with assets in excess of $5 billion, a full suite of services, and highly competitive rates. Salem Five differentiates itself from megabanks by combining technology with a personal touch and an understanding of what its customers want most. The headline in one of their online ads says it all. "We know your name and your needs. Let's uncomplicate money.™"

"Innovation and a relentless focus on customer relationships have always been embedded in our DNA," says Troy Preble, who joined Salem Five in 2016 as vice president of enterprise infrastructure. With solid experience in driving results focused change in IT operations, Troy's appointment reflects the bank's decades-long commitment to staying ahead of the technology curve. In 1995, with an investment of just $20,000 and a small team of young programmers, Salem Five launched its first online banking platform. This then-novel concept was not only a hit with customers; it was ranked No. 4 in the nation in 1999 by Gomez Advisors, an internet research firm, ahead of all but two of the largest national banks.

Among the top priorities on Preble's digital transformation list after joining Salem Five was upgrading the bank's data storage infrastructure as part of a major upgrade of online banking applications with a third-party provider. "Our legacy platform did not provide the performance, availability, flexibility, and TCO advantages we needed to maintain our competitive edge." Preble brought in Daymark Solutions, a leading technology and integration solutions provider, to evaluate solutions and architect a new infrastructure plan.

Sean Gilbride, Daymark's Chief Technology Officer, led the vendor evaluation and recommended Infinidat for upgrading Salem Five's data storage infrastructure. "Infinidat offers an extremely reliable platform which self-optimizes performance, requiring very little attention from a management perspective," Gilbride says. "And there has been zero downtime since we installed the system."

While Salem Five's customer-facing applications run with a third-party provider, everything else, including their virtual systems, databases, business workloads, active directory, and email, runs on InfiniBox®. The reliability and availability of InfiniBox is critical for Salem Five's operations.

Beyond its technical advantages, Infinidat delivers important business advantages for Salem Five. According to Gilbride, "the capacity-on-demand model enables Salem Five to pay for storage only as they need it. When they need capacity, it's there from day one. No need to go through the hassle of requesting a quote, negotiating terms, receiving equipment, and having to schedule a maintenance window. Salem Five can simply grow at a moment's notice and pay for it retroactively."

Clientèle Life Insurance

Banks aren't the only ones that invest in Infinidat. Insurance companies also see Infinidat as a storage vendor of choice. One that has spoken out publicly, like Salem Five, is Clientèle Life Insurance, a well-respected insurance company in South Africa.

Clientèle Life Insurance wanted to ensure competitive advantage with consistent uptime and fast data access. It wanted a storage solution with a three-tier architecture that delivers high availability, high performance, top-notch replication capabilities, support for virtualized environments, and flexibility to scale at short notice.

Clientèle Life Insurance reduced risk by choosing Infinidat as its storage solution provider. Two InfiniBox systems for synchronous replication between the insurance company's production and disaster recovery data centres are in operation. The ROI has been generated through cost savings, enabling them to do more with fewer resources.

Infinidat's cloud-like flexible consumption models optimize budget for the customer. The cost efficiencies are coupled with a 40% performance improvement, supported by proactive system monitoring. Ultimately, Clientèle Life is able to deliver a better customer experience through consistent uptime and speedy access to information.

Contship Italia Group

Another company that sought competitive advantage through Infinidat's world-class solutions is Contship Italia Group, the Italian leader in container terminal logistics and intermodal solutions. To accomplish it, they needed to upgrade critical enterprise storage for VMware. They saw it as an opportunity to reduce the complexity of the storage infrastructure. They needed a more autonomous, easier-to-use solution.

In early February 2021, Contship Italia began looking to replace its incumbent all-flash array data storage technology. The support for the old system was ending and it required dedicated management by a full-time engineer. The team at

Contship was looking to migrate to a more autonomous solution and an easier to manage enterprise storage infrastructure, so that their skilled staff could focus on other business critical services.

Although not quite at the petabyte data storage scale yet, Contship required a higher performing, always available environment that could scale quickly. Fundamental to the decision-making process Contship was seeking a solution which could provide zero-RPO and RTOs on the company's mission critical business services, without interrupting any customer facing services. Infinidat's active-active replication provides these exact requirements. It is not only faster from a latency perspective than other vendors, but it also provides very predictable high performance and scalability for mission-critical workloads.

"During our procurement process we evaluated two other leading competitors but found their solutions did not represent a true active-active enterprise system," explains Mario Scimone, who is responsible for LSCT Infrastructure within Contship Italia IT Services Group. "We worked closely with our senior management to reassure them that a move towards a more innovative solution like Infinidat's InfiniBox®, with the lowest TCO in the industry, was the platform we needed to embrace."

Contship selected Infinidat because of the ease of management with a set-it-and-forget-it approach. The fact that the InfiniBox Active-Active replication and VMware's Storage Cluster (VMSC) are fully integrated was also highly attractive. It meant seamless VMware-Infinidat integration. The simplified migration to Infinidat's platform exceeded expectations.

The move freed up resources for other value-added activities.   Contship was able to achieve 40% cost savings with Infinidat. At the same time, the company gained higher performance and lower latency in its storage, while adding the autonomous automation that it wanted. Infinidat's system delivers 100% application and data availability for Contship Italia's virtualized environments.

In summary

These multiple customers that have adopted Infinidat's state-of-the-art, enterprise storage solutions are just a few examples of our company's expanding installed base. More than 25% of the Fortune 50 are now Infinidat customers, leveraging the company's unique value proposition for large enterprises to provide InfiniBox and InfiniGuard® as their primary storage, modern data protection, disaster recovery and business continuity, and cyber resilience solutions.