CISCO

PURESTORAGE®

BDO

BDO

Location
Australia

Industry
Accountancy / Business Advisory

Company
BDO Australia

Use Case
• *Database*
• *Applications*
• *FlashStack™*

Business Transformation
The task of producing financial models, which used to take 45 minutes, can now be completed in just 18 minutes, while the task of migrating virtual servers has dropped from 200 seconds to just 10 seconds. The company now has the agility to meet their clients' IT requirements and provide exceptional client service and responsiveness.

Challenges
• BDO needed the right partner to keep them at the forefront of innovation for their clients and employees.
• The performance of BDO's technology infrastructure, based on technology from three different suppliers, was falling behind what the company needed.
• Large-scale tasks such as financial modeling and reporting were taking longer than was desirable.

IT Transformation
• Leading accountancy and business advisory organisation expands their value-add by incorporating new technology and efficiencies.
• Moving to FlashStack delivers a 100 per cent flash environment.
• Upgrade and re-architect of infrastructure now enables better agility and ability to deliver against business requirements.

FlashStack

BDO Builds its Future on Solid State

Few businesses are exempt from the pressure of rising expectations and getting results faster. Today's customers have a growing demand for innovation and personalised services — they want customised solutions with reliability. But with an unlimited choice of service providers it can be difficult to find the right partner.

BDO Australia, one of the world's leading accountancy and business advisory organisations, is focused on exceptional client service and responsiveness. With the development of new service lines to meet client needs, BDO needed the right partner to keep them at the forefront of innovation for their clients and employees. This led them to Cisco to help them expand their value-add by incorporating new technology and efficiencies.

Performance Falling Behind Requirements

According to BDO Brisbane's Chief Information Officer Nick Brant, while the technology infrastructure at the company's Brisbane data centre had served it well for many years, by 2017 its performance was falling behind what the company needed.

"We were seeing application and performance pressure," Brant said. "We were getting to a stage where the current storage was old, and disks were being replaced hand-over-fist, and the speed of the disks was not very good."

While these problems were causing extra work for the IT team, Brant said large-scale tasks such as financial modeling and reporting were taking longer than was desirable, which would have consequences for client service levels if not addressed.

"So we needed to upgrade and re-architect our infrastructure to alleviate those pressures," Brant said.

"*Once we customised the Cisco UCS kit to suit the design that we wanted, the FlashStack attached to it and we've never looked back.*"

KIM JOHR
IT Operations Manager

The situation was not helped by BDO's infrastructure being based on technology from three different suppliers.

"It was affecting lots of process and performance, from the top down," Brant said. "So everyone was aware of the issues and constraints we were faced with."

All of this was constraining the IT team's ability to respond with the agility that the business required. It was critical then for BDO to make the right decision in terms of an upgrade that would suit its long-term requirements for responsiveness and reliability.

> "*We can do things faster, better, and stronger now than we ever were able to.*"
>
> **BEN FRASER**
> Senior Systems Administrator for Technology

Changing to Flash Storage

Brant and his team conducted an extensive review of potential solutions, looking at both hyperconverged and converged infrastructure in addition to the latest generation of traditional three-part architecture.

The final decision was to opt for Cisco's Unified Computing System (UCS) architecture using FlashStack converged infrastructure solution from Cisco and Pure Storage.

FlashStack consists of Cisco's compute, networking, and management technology combined with Pure Storage FlashArray™ storage to deliver a 100 per cent flash environment.

"The FlashStack made a lot of sense to us," Brant said. "It ticked a lot of boxes for what we needed it to deliver, and also having the one company to deal with was a massive advantage."

According to BDO's IT Operations Manager Kim Johr, opting for

FlashStack over a traditional architecture did require a degree of convincing.

"But it didn't take long to see the value in it once we got through the set-up," Johr said. "It was not particularly complex, and I didn't realise we could do so much with it. Once we customised the Cisco UCS kit to suit the design that we wanted, the FlashStack attached to it and we've never looked back."

Simplifying Storage Management

The results have been pleasing, for both the IT team and the business overall. According to Johr, the task of producing financial models, which used to take 45 minutes, can now be completed in just 18 minutes, while the task of migrating virtual servers has dropped from 200 seconds to just 10 seconds.

According to BDO's Senior Systems Administrator Ben Fraser, "We can do things faster, better, and stronger now than we ever were able to. As IT, our ability to

be agile and keep up with demand in the business just hadn't been ideal. The business would come to us and say they wanted to do something, and we would firstly have to juggle hardware resources. But now with the new kit, when they say, 'we want to do this,' we can say, 'yep, done.' And while it is not a measurable metric, we have the agility and ability as IT to change with those requirements."

Brant added that there is also comfort in knowing the system now is much more robust and resilient. "I now have confidence that we can deliver pretty much anything the business asks for in a timely fashion. We know that we can spin up a new environment or give them high performing applications, or whatever they like."

Replicating to Other Sites

Having successfully migrated to FlashStack at the Brisbane data centre, Fraser said that BDO is expanding use of the technology to other sites.

"We can replicate it on a smaller scale easily, and also at another data centre, to have an active-active implementation of our production systems," Fraser said.

Most importantly, Johr said that the IT team can now better deliver against the requirements of the business with a degree of confidence that was never possible before.

"We've introduced entire new business lines in the last 12 months, with a different set of requirements we can now meet," Johr explained. "And we would never have met those requirements on the old kit."

Products and Services

Unified Computing FlashStack Converged Infrastructure:
- *Cisco® UCS® servers*
- *Pure Storage® FlashArray™*
- *VMware® vSphere®*

Cisco Networking and Security Solutions:
- *Cisco Nexus 5548 and 9148 switches*

www.cisco.com/go/flashstack