

BEST S.A. uses all-flash technology from Pure Storage® to sustain data growth, maximize operational efficiency, and improve the responsiveness of business-critical applications. At the same time, they accelerate software development with containerization tools from Pure Storage, which provide smart provisioning, elastic scaling, and transparent recovery.

**BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION**

Through their investment in Pure Storage, the company saves on both capital and operating expenses, which frees up budget to grow the business and to create competitive advantage.

REGION / COUNTRY

EMEA / Poland

INDUSTRY

Financial Services

“Pure Storage meets all the criteria we have for a long-term solution.”

Jacek Zawadzki, *Chief Information Officer*

BEST S.A. COLLECTS A HIGH RATE OF RETURN ON ITS INVESTMENT IN PURE STORAGE

BEST S.A. is one of the largest debt-collection businesses in Poland. The company is divided into three lines of business: an investment arm that buys portfolios of debt; a servicing business, which collects payments from debtors; and a legal department that works out payment plans for accounts that are in arrears.

The company has three pillars to its corporate strategy, according to Jacek Zawadzki, Chief Information Officer and a member of the management board who is responsible for all business operations:

“The first pillar is financial; finding sources of money to buy debt portfolios. Second is operational excellence; we have to be very efficient in collecting payments at minimal cost. And the third pillar is digitalization; applying technology to build a competitive advantage.”

One part of operational excellence, Zawadzki noted, is the data center, which is both a cost center and a potential source of savings if old methods can be replaced with new ones. “My strategy is to make our data center components more effective and cost less — but with the same or better performance. Technology should always be as efficient or more efficient than before, and less expensive.”

GAINING EFFICIENCIES THROUGH PURE STORAGE

One of the biggest challenges for BEST’s IT department is the ever-increasing amount of data to be stored and processed. “It is not unusual for us to add 500GB of data per month,” Zawadzki observed. “These files are accessed frequently for collection and analytic purposes. And of course, all of it must be secured to meet GDPR standards.”

The ever-increasing demands for efficient storage management eventually led Zawadzki and his team to re-evaluate its storage infrastructure. “The analysis of data is very important to us, and we are investing in data scientists and analytic tools. We need strong analysis to improve the efficiency of our collection operations. To support these data scientists, we needed a storage solution that provides high performance, scalability and cost-effectiveness.”

COMPANY:

BEST S.A.
www.best.com.pl

USE CASE:

- Database – Microsoft® SQL Server
- VSI – VMware® vSphere®
- Kubernetes – Elasticsearch, Grafana, Prometheus

CHALLENGES:

- Constantly growing volumes of data strained the legacy storage system.
- Company strategy emphasizes both operational excellence and cost control, requiring IT to improve efficiency.

IT TRANSFORMATION:

- Data reduction as high as 7:1 saves on capital and operating expenses.
- Consistently low latencies improve application response times.
- No dedicated storage administrator required.

“We are getting 6.9:1 data reduction for our main databases, and that is a huge advantage for us.”

Jacek Zawadzki, *Chief Information Officer*

He added, “In the past, the only solution to handling growth in data was to buy more hard drives, and then buy even more hard drives. That was not a good model. A lot of our data is duplicated, but we got no deduplication from our legacy storage. We were very excited, then, to learn about all-flash memory.”

Zawadzki contacted his system integrator, Trecom, and it suggested a look at Pure Storage. “They said not only was it all-flash, but it had high deduplication as well. I said that sounded great on paper, but I wanted to see it. So, we arranged a proof-of-concept (POC) test. And we were surprised at the results — everything that was said in the sales presentation was proved in the POC. That doesn’t happen very often.”

BEST ran numerous tests between the FlashArray//X20 from Pure Storage and solutions from another vendor. The FlashArray™ was rated superior in virtually all respects, including I/O performance, latency, database queries and data reduction (7:1 for Pure versus 3:1 for the other vendor’s solution).

IMPROVED PERFORMANCE AND REDUCED MANAGEMENT DEMANDS

Based on the results from the POC, the decision was made to adopt Pure Storage. “From my perspective, I wanted to increase the efficiency of the business and maximize the deduplication in order to get the lowest possible cost per TB,” Zawadzki said.

BEST installed a FlashArray//X20 in the Fall of 2018 and moved its most important workloads onto it. The key application is Sigma, an internally developed set of tools for managing all of the company’s main processes, including collections and legal actions. “Sigma is 90% of our business, and it all runs on Microsoft SQL Server and Pure Storage,” Zawadzki explained.

Also running concurrently on Pure Storage are VMware datastores, Verint workforce optimization, a document management system, and Kubernetes containerization. Kubernetes is managing a variety of operating environments and tools, including Elasticsearch, Grafana, InfluxDB, Prometheus, Alertmanager, HAProxy and WildFly. To optimize its Kubernetes containerization environment, BEST also is deploying a Jenkins CI/CD pipeline that automates the work of system administrators and programmers and provides tighter version control of applications.

Running mixed workloads on the company’s previous VNX storage system was problematic, Zawadzki noted, but is accomplished easily on the Pure Storage array without any performance penalty. Latencies have consistently been at or below 2 milliseconds.

Zawadzki has been particularly impressed by the performance of the Pure Storage array on his highest-priority feature: data reduction. “We are getting 6.9:1 data reduction for our Sigma databases, which exceed 20TB, and that is a huge advantage for us. Overall data reduction is 4.5:1, which is more than we expected and reduces footprint in the data center as well as our need to buy more storage in the future.”

Key future initiatives for BEST include strengthening business continuity through enhanced disaster-recovery procedures between its two data centers, and a continuing push for improved efficiencies in the data center. In both areas, Zawadzki has a strong partner in Pure Storage. “Pure meets all the criteria we have for a long-term solution — enhanced performance, reliability and unmatched cost-efficiency. We couldn’t ask for more.”



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