



CASESTUDY

# FARMATODO



**Region / Country**

LATAM / Venezuela and Colombia

**Industry**

Retail

**Company**

Farmatodo

**Partner**

Suministros Obras y Sistemas

**Use Case**

- Database – Oracle®, Microsoft® SQL Server
- Virtual Server Infrastructure – VMware® vSphere®
- Hypervisor – OpenStack/ KVM with Microsoft Azure and Google® Cloud
- BI – Tableau
- POS – Merchant

**Business Transformation**

FlashStack™ – the joint Cisco® and Pure Storage® converged infrastructure solution – provides unrestricted support for dynamic business growth, while reducing costs and improving the efficiency of IT staff.

**Challenges**

- Limitations of legacy storage system restricted overnight processing.
- Company-critical business continuity and disaster recovery tasks could not be implemented.

- Administrative burden negatively impacted IT team efficiencies and diverted efforts from added-value, business-related activities.

**IT Transformation**

- The solution reduced latency from 10ms down to 0.5ms — a drop of 95%.
- Out-of-the-box the solution is compatible with the existing IT infrastructure.
- The company now has instant access to responsive, high-quality support resources.
- Farmatodo can now reliably perform inter-country replication.





**Farmatodo Deploys FlashStack – the Joint Cisco and Pure Storage Converged Infrastructure Solution – to Accelerate Competitive Differentiation and Strengthen Business Continuity Performance**

In 1918, a small family drugstore opened in northern Venezuela with a simple, noble goal: Create a welcoming environment that provides the local community with excellent access to medicine. More than a century later, the company – now known as Farmatodo – has grown into a highly successful multinational entity offering a full range of health and wellness products and home supplies.

Farmatodo is the largest retail pharmacy in Venezuela, with over 175 stores, and is a formidable presence in Colombia, with almost 60 retail pharmacies. A driving aspiration for Farmatodo has always been to empower communities across the region with its self-service neighborhood drugstore model.

**Success Has its Challenges**

A key factor in supporting the company’s growth has been the innovative use of data to guide and optimize all aspects of its business. However, creating an IT infrastructure capable of keeping pace with Farmatodo’s

rapid expansion and exponentially growing consumption of operational information proved to be a continual challenge.

The company’s IT team had done an admirable job in responding to constant demands for additional computing resources but inevitably, the need to deliver quickly resulted in a disjointed assortment of systems, technologies and processes.

Joel Parra Pérez, operations systems administration coordinator at Farmatodo, elaborated: “Our environment was very complex and rife with issues caused by cabling, configurations

*“We evaluated all the major suppliers and Pure Storage was at the top for each of our key criteria.”*

**JOEL PARRA PÉREZ**

Operations systems administration coordinator





and compatibilities. This made it very challenging to ensure that company-critical tasks, like order processing and business continuity processes, could be efficiently and consistently executed.”

The massive increase in data volumes and the associated requirements to manage information placed an insurmountable burden on the company’s legacy storage infrastructure. Jaroslav Useche Acosta, Wintel system administrator, recalled, “We could have kept adding more and more drives but the performance of our shared file storage dramatically degraded

*“The ability of FlashStack to record, replicate and compact data is just like magic!”*

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Operations systems administration coordinator

whenever we approached 80% capacity. This was very concerning considering the critical applications we had to keep running. We feared that if we didn’t make a change, Farmatodo’s continued success would be in jeopardy.”

**Pure Storage — Delivering on the Promise**

The retailer began its search for a new storage solution by researching several of the industry’s more traditional suppliers. Cognizant of Farmatodo’s desire to aggressively improve performance and scalability, a trusted local IT advisor — Suministros Obras y Sistemas (SOS) — recommended adding Pure Storage to the company’s vendor evaluation.

At first, the Farmatodo team was hesitant to believe that the Pure Storage pledge of effortless migrations, reliability and performance was achievable. Pérez admitted, “Everything

sounded so good that at first we thought it was just marketing hype.”

Enthusiastic to demonstrate the compelling benefits, SOS coordinated a collaboration between Pure Storage and Cisco Systems Venezuela to create a converged infrastructure proof-of-concept (POC). The POC set up a direct comparison between FlashStack the joint Cisco and Pure Storage converged infrastructure solution — which enables the benefits of all-flash storage to be uniquely leveraged in environments like Farmatodo’s Cisco UCS-based data centers — and Farmatodo’s legacy system against a selection of the company’s production workloads. In parallel to testing performance and functionality, a total cost of ownership (TCO) assessment also was performed.

The initial evaluation quickly proved that the claimed simplicity of migration and administering the Pure Storage and Cisco FlashStack was a reality; in under four





hours, all the data, software and applications needed for the POC were brought online. The results were equally dramatic: The solid-state Pure Storage FlashStack Mini reduced latency in the environment from 10ms down to 0.5ms — a drop of 95%.

“We evaluated all the major suppliers and Pure Storage was at the top for each of our key criteria, executing especially well against our goals of performance and cost efficiency,” reported Pérez.

*“We’ve been able to easily implement data recovery and replication between our Venezuela and Colombia sites: Something we never could have done before.”*

**JAROSLAV USECHE ACOSTA**  
Wintel system administrator

### Rapid Return-on-investment

As an integrated component of the overall value proposition, SOS also advocated subscribing to the Pure Evergreen™ Storage program.

Evergreen enables organizations to scale and upgrade storage as needed: all made without any downtime, performance impact or data migrations, and while protecting their storage investment. Multi-year TCO comparisons irrefutably confirmed the business benefits of investing in the Pure Storage solution over continuing to support Farmatodo’s legacy system.

The partnership between Pure Storage and Cisco also enabled use of the Cisco Validated Design (CVD) methodology. A CVD removes the traditional burden of predicting the long-term compatibility of multi-vendor environments by verifying that diverse solutions that need to interoperate are correctly architected and implemented from the very beginning.

Farmatodo has a hybrid infrastructure with two local data centers and subscriptions to Microsoft Azure and Google Cloud. While the cloud environment is primarily dedicated to customer-focused services, the local infrastructure hosts all the company’s core services. FlashStack serves as the base platform for Farmatodo’s business projects in Colombia and Venezuela. As such, the majority of the company’s critical business applications and infrastructure components are connected to the array, including VMware, Oracle VM, Oracle Financial and Retail, as well as point-of-sales and business intelligence systems.

Implementation of the FlashStack, the Pure Storage and Cisco converged infrastructure solution was very efficient: “The physical connection only took half of the morning. We just needed two UTP cables, a fiber cable and power cables. We were able to set-up, tune and be fully implemented in just two days. The simplicity was admirable,” remarked Pérez.





He continued, “FlashStack and VMware integration is practically out-of-the-box. With our Cisco UCS environment, all we had to do was attach FlashStack and it immediately started distributing volumes and performing the install. This type of plug-and-play capability was a very impressive experience for us all.”

Once installed, one of the top priorities was to run availability tests on the new array. Pérez described, “We attempted to sabotage the Pure Storage platform by randomly deactivating cards and removing cables as if we were experiencing a series of real-life failures. The response was rock solid and completely transparent.”

complicated because our previous platform depended on external tools, links and applications. With Pure Storage, everything is native,” enthused Acosta. “We’ve been able to easily implement data recovery and replication between our Venezuela and Colombia sites, something we could never have done before.”

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Operations systems  
administration coordinator

Importantly, FlashStack solution delivered on Farmatodo’s requirement for improving business continuity across the company’s infrastructure. “Architecting a disaster recovery and data replication strategy used to be extremely

**Speed, Simplicity and World-class Support**

The ability to perform frequent backups without impacting operational workloads has been another major benefit for Farmatodo. Acosta explained,





“Previously, our machines would often die when attempting to take a backup snapshot. The plug-in between Pure Storage and VMware enables us to process snapshots directly in the array: We’re now able to perform backups much faster — in just a matter of minutes — and with complete reliability and zero disruption to business operations.”

Pérez added, “Replication performance was one of the big reasons for selecting Pure Storage: It is one of the things that I admire

*“Because of my first-hand experiences with the technology, I am an outspoken advocate for Pure Storage with my peers.”*

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the most. The ability of Pure FlashStack to record, replicate and compact data is just like magic!”

The simplicity of managing the FlashStack system has saved the Farmatodo team a considerable amount of time over its previous storage solution. Acosta compared, “Provisioning a standard Windows 2016 server with a 100 GB disk on the legacy platform could take up to 20-30 minutes. With Pure Storage, the same process takes just a few minutes. On top of this, we used to have to put new team members through extensive training before they were productive. For Pure Storage, I was able to learn everything in less than a week, including traditionally complex tasks like creating volumes and setting up backup routines.”

FlashStack also delivered on Farmatodo’s goal of improving the efficiency of its data storage infrastructure. Overnight processing of sales and

inventory data that used to take between 8-10 hours has dropped dramatically. “Data compression rates have been really impressive; we’re seeing rates in the low teens for several of our boxes,” stated Pérez. “The Pure algorithms are continually optimizing, so the more data we add, the better results we get.”

Because the legacy storage infrastructure was already at capacity, the only way to deliver more performance to any of the Oracle-related applications was to increase the number of CPUs being utilized. However, Oracle’s use of a CPU-based licensing model resulted in escalating costs just to keep up with business demands. The newfound ability to easily extract more performance from storage has immediately removed the need for such a large CPU capacity —with a subsequent reduction in the costs of licenses needed.

An unanticipated benefit has been that the technical team members





have experienced a transformation of their daily routines. Pérez reflected, “Because we don’t have to spend large amounts of time trying to administer multiple technologies that demanded constant attention, we’re now able to focus on delivering real value to the organization. We can concentrate on what is really important.”

Acosta concurred, “Things flow so efficiently and effortlessly with

Pure Storage that we definitely feel a comforting sense of calm.”

As a company located in South America, technical support has been a major consideration for the Farnatodo team. The Pure1® support program from Pure Storage has been designed from the ground up to be highly responsive and location agnostic.

Pérez noted, “With the other providers, support has been unpredictable; we frequently didn’t know when we’d receive help.

Pure1 gets us a call-back within a few minutes and we have a number to call for an even faster response, should we ever need it.”

Pérez concluded, “Because of my first-hand experiences with the technology, I am an outspoken advocate for Pure Storage with my peers. Like all IT professionals, I seek out solutions that deliver what is promised and enable me to execute my role in an orderly and structured manner. I have that with Pure Storage.”

## Products and Services

Unified Computing FlashStack:

- Cisco® UCS® servers
- Pure Storage® FlashArray™
- VMware® vSphere®

Cisco Networking and Security Solutions:

- Cisco Nexus® switches

[www.FlashStack.com](http://www.FlashStack.com)

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