

**BCS Group** relies on the Pure Storage FlashArray to improve business performance, delivering time savings. The turn key automation company experienced disruptions in business operations when traditional spinning disk failed to keep up with the demands of a virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI). With Pure Storage, key application development projects are completed much more efficiently and the company has a highly reliable and available evergreen storage system.



#### BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Productivity throughout the company is enhanced through higher reliability of business-critical applications. Key business reports are generated in half the time. Routine system maintenance times cut by up to 90%. Storage administration eliminated as an ongoing IT task.

#### GEO

New Zealand

#### INDUSTRY

Manufacturing

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Brett Hobbs, *Group IT Manager*

#### BUILDING A BEST-OF-BREED SOLUTION FOR THE FUTURE

BCS Group is a turn key automation company operating in the aviation sector with complimentary business in the adjacent verticals of logistics and industrial. It's part of the worldwide Daifuku group — the global leader in materials handling. Headquartered in Auckland, New Zealand with 450 staff spanning New Zealand, Australia and Malaysia, BCS Group is a supplier of choice to airports, airlines, freight and industrial customers around the world.

In addition to its supportive, family-orientated culture, IT has been a crucial factor in enabling the company's growth. As BCS Group expands into the warehousing and food service sectors, storage is a core requirement for the future of the business, underpinning everything from project management to the speed of operations.

Brett Hobbs, Group IT Manager, has seen BCS Group go from strength-to-strength in his 9.5 years with the company. “In the business of materials handling we experience a lot of last-minute changes. We can't have storage limit us each time a new project comes along. Choosing the right solution removes the infrastructure roadblock, so finding the ideal match was very important,” Hobbs explained.

BCS Group's legacy system was inadequate for its environment. On top of frustrating staff by causing the network to run slowly, the ongoing heavy maintenance costs were counterintuitive the business. Rather than refresh the environment, BCS Group required a forward looking solution that would provide higher reliability.

“As we move to newer workflows, our reliance on databases increases. We'd hit a performance wall and it was time look at a full storage upgrade beyond an infrastructure perspective,” Hobbs said.

#### PURE PROVIDES FUTURE-PROOFED PERFORMANCE EDGE

Being a project-driven business, BCS Group required a storage system that excelled with deduplication and compression. Traditional spinning disk struggled to keep latency down, with staff frustrated by latencies averaging anywhere between 15-200 milliseconds. “80 per cent of our data is operating systems — all virtual machines. The folder structure of every project is copied numerous times so we needed to move away from constantly refreshing the environment,” Hobbs continued.

BCS Group investigated the traditional players in the all-flash configuration space, however they didn't stand out as a solution that would solve the organisation's

**COMPANY:**

BCS Group  
[www.bcsgroup.biz](http://www.bcsgroup.biz)

**USE CASE:**

- VSI – VMware® vSphere®
- Database – Microsoft® SQL

**CHALLENGES:**

- Unreliable disk-based system with high latency caused failures to occur fortnightly.
- Legacy system was unable to keep up with application requirements and unable to meet the needs of company growth.
- The company required higher performance for evolving data environments.

**IT TRANSFORMATION:**

- Achieved a data reduction rate of 3.2:1.
- Reduced physical footprint from a full rack to a single FlashArray//m20.
- Reduced power usage in data centre by 3 kilowatts.
- Reduced latency from anywhere between 15 – 200 milliseconds to less than 2 milliseconds.
- Significantly increased reliability; zero system failures.

challenges. After following key players in the storage industry for a while, Hobbs was aware of Pure Storage and recognised it as the next evolution in storage. “I got in touch with Pure and the rest is history.”

The opportunity to move from traditional data centre storage to a small amount of rack space was very appealing to Hobbs and his team. Not only has it achieved a data reduction rate of 3.2:1, it’s reduced the physical footprint from a full rack of storage to a single array and the simplicity of the solution means another rack is easily added as storage requirements grow.

“Pure Storage all-inclusive software licensing stood out. It includes many of our required features, like setting up replication for local resiliency and cross data-centre disaster recovery. We also have automatic access to new systems without having to update our license,” Hobbs explained.

Hobbs said the implementation process was extremely straight-forward. BCS Group virtualised desktops with the Pure Storage FlashArray and VMware vSphere, streamlining fast and easily scalable all-flash performance. This has reduced the amount of time spent rebooting desktops and other day-to-day virtual desktops operations.

“We jumped right in. Pure Storage was very supportive of what we were looking to do upfront such as gaining access to the pre-release software versions for a particular feature. Pure even offered to go the extra mile to help with host setup and data migration but we were happy to take care of this ourselves. The migration of the entirely virtualised environment took place over a week. The host recognition was very simple; last time we did this our legacy system took two months to copy the data, so Pure was a remarkable improvement,” Hobbs said.

All of BCS Group’s workloads — with everything from multi-terabyte Microsoft SQL databases to MS Exchange to back-end management such as anti-virus and spam filtering — now sit on a Pure Storage FlashArray//m20. “Our development environments also sit on Pure. They can be spun up in seconds and applications tested at full scale. It also means production systems continue to run seamlessly while multiple dev/test systems are running.”

**SIMPLIFIED PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE DRIVE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY**

The benefits of the implementation were evident immediately, the most noticeable being the improved responsiveness of BCS Group’s internal systems. Prior to Pure Storage, Windows updates across 100 production servers took one week. This process is now completed in one night. “We no longer need to plan updates over a multi-week, after-hours operation. Repatching takes less than 10 minutes opposed to two or three hours, which has relieved our engineers from sitting around for hours waiting for the installation to complete. Servers restart so quickly that we need to check logs to ensure they’ve actually restarted. It’s unbelievable,” Hobbs said.

Since going all-flash, Hobbs has noticed a large difference in system reliability versus the prior disk solution. “Disk failures were a twice weekly occurrence. With Pure Storage, we haven’t had to replace anything.” The transparency of the solution is another important benefit. It’s configured via a web front-end which is easy to report against, as it indicates live and historical data trends. “Pure Storage transparency is fantastic. The FlashArray provides real-time stats so we have insight to how well the storage is performing, whereas this was a manual process with our legacy system.”

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Choosing Pure Storage has eliminated a number of maintenance issues for BCS Group, having completely removed storage administration from the day-to-day activity. “When you’re running virtual environments, storage is the sticky point. We had no idea how great an impact storage had on the entire business until we changed from disk to all-flash. There’s no longer a need to monitor storage. We track capacity and that’s it,” Hobbs said.

Prior to Pure Storage, maintenance was holding BCS Group back from important initiatives, as staff had to deal with storage issues each time a new project came up. “Pure has removed tension allowing staff to focus 100 per cent on the project without having to consider storage. We walk into meetings with other managers to discuss new developments without having to think about storage limitations.”

For Hobbs, the most outstanding feature is the Pure Storage customer-centric approach. “Pure really listens to what we want to see with our storage solution — and it delivers. Traditionally we’ve had to take product upgrades as they come but Pure is willing to tailor the solution to our bespoke needs.”

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