Centiro Solutions, a leading innovator in cloud-based transport and delivery management solutions, uses smart storage for cloud IT from Pure Storage to improve performance, predictability and reliability of global customer database, supporting the business's continued international growth.

centiro

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Data is now seamlessly integrated with business processes, and time can be better allocated on tasks that drive business performance. The company is able to keep pace with the needs of its customers, regardless of time and location.

GEO

Sweden

INDUSTRY

SaaS

"My initial impression, which was shared by our CEO, was that Pure Storage would be the right partner for us as we share similar corporate philosophies, and have the same desire for high performance and innovation."

Martin Borjesson, *ICT Manager*

CENTIRO NEEDS CONSISTENT AND PREDICTABLE DATA MANAGEMENT TO SUPPORT GLOBAL OPERATIONS

Centiro is a leading innovator in cloud-based transport and delivery management solutions.

Founded in 1998, the company has experienced significant growth. Its products now empower companies and finer supply chains in over 105 countries, with 150 employees across four offices in Sweden, UK, India and the US.

Centiro's list of clients is impressive and includes iconic brands renowned for supply-chain innovation and effectiveness. The company's ability to attract and retain its high calibre of customers relies on the innovation, speed, and reliability of its service.

Martin Borjesson is Centiro's ICT Manager. He has been with the business for nine years. The nature of Centiro's work — Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) provision across a diverse range of customers and geographical locations — makes efficient and effective management of customer and prospect data vitally important to the growth of the business.

"As a relatively small team, we rely on our systems and processes to make sure the appropriate actions are taken in order to deliver for our customers regardless of when and where the request is being made. We need to be responsive to change and able to locate the appropriate data as required," Martin said.

CENTIRO IDENTIFIES A PARTNER FOR ITS GROWTH JOURNEY

The relationship between Centiro and Pure Storage evolved in early 2016.

Centiro's existing storage system was up for replacement and had some latency issues, with continual errors resulting from the use of Java in the user interface, and it would not keep up with future demands.

"Essentially, we had grown out of our previous storage system," said Martin. "It was no longer fit for our purposes and we knew that to be able to continue our international growth, faster and more reliable performance was mandatory."

COMPANY:

Centiro Solutions AB
www.centiro.com

USE CASE:

- Database – Microsoft® SQL Server
- VSI – VMware® vSphere®, Microsoft Windows® Server Hyper-V

CHALLENGES:

- Consistency in performance and reliability of existing arrays was lacking.
- Error and frustration resulted from the use of Java.
- Existing data storage was unable to keep pace with the company's international growth.

IT TRANSFORMATION:

- Data deduplication of 4.1 for database and virtualised workloads reduced storage requirements.
- No need for maintenance windows, allowing for continuous operation.
- Data reindexing is faster and can now be done around the clock.

"The smart storage model integrated perfectly with our processes and gave us a level of consistency we'd never previously had. In our work, milliseconds can massively impact performance, and so predictable performance with no latency spikes is vitally important."

Martin Borjesson, *ICT Manager*

Martin knew little of the Pure Storage offering until becoming aware of the company's leadership position in Gartner's Magic Quadrant for Solid State Arrays at an industry roadshow. Based on his intention to migrate from a hybrid to an all-flash storage model, Martin invited Pure Storage to provide proof of concept (POC) for its FlashArray//m20 system.

Culture plays a vital role in Centiro. It has consistently been ranked one of the best places to work — seven years running in the top five in the medium-sized workplace category — by the Great Place to Work® Institute. This reflects the company's non-hierarchical, innovation-led culture, and the importance it places on a work-life business.

"As a starting point, it was important for us to find a storage provider culturally-aligned with our organisation," Martin explained. "My initial impression, which was shared by our CEO, was that Pure Storage would be the right partner for us as we share similar corporate philosophies, and have the same desire for high performance and innovation."

Compared with the POCs Martin received from other storage providers, the Pure Storage offering stood out due to its strong performance, simplicity of use, and its clean user interface.

"The criteria we set in the procurement process was very specific," said Martin. "We needed encryption-at-rest, data compression and deduplication, and built in replication capabilities and strong technical support with built in call home functionality. It was clear Pure Storage could deliver on all accounts."

PURE STORAGE DELIVERS SMART STORAGE TECHNOLOGY FOR FASTER, MORE SEAMLESS SALES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGEMENT

From the outset, Pure Storage was able to show a clear understanding of the role effective data management played in Centiro's business.

"Storage performance and reliability is really important for us," Martin added. "We need consistent, predictable performance for our cloud-based services. Our platform is based on the Microsoft SQL Server. If we have poor performance on the storage layer, it will affect our product's performance in its application."

Centiro selected Pure Storage as its storage provider in February 2016. Pure Storage deployed two FlashArray//m20 arrays at two datacentres with built-in replication. Handled by the Pure Storage technical sales team, the installation, managed virtually, took less than a day. Centiro started the migration process straight away and was finished within less than a week, with zero interruption to Centiro's business operations.

Post-installation, Centiro's storage system maintains a mixed workload consisting of SQL database servers and both VMware vSphere and Microsoft Hyper-V.

"The new storage system handles our requirements extremely well. We have encountered none of the issues we regularly faced with our previous disk-based system. Important tasks like reindexing — which has gone from hours to minutes — can take place anytime with complete reliability. We also now have no maintenance windows, which means we don't have disruption to our workload," said Martin.

"The key difference we noticed following implementation was in experiencing no latency spikes. The flash model integrated perfectly with our processes and gave us a level of application consistency we'd never previously had. In our work, milliseconds can massively impact performance, and so predictable performance with no latency spikes is vitally important."

CENTIRO SEEING SOLID RESULTS SIX MONTHS AFTER MIGRATION

Working with a client list of major companies, Centiro's new storage network has the potential to transform Centiro's operations and cement its relationships with its growing list of multinational customers.

"The nature of our work involves real-time interactions with customers, underpinned by strong Service Level Agreements (SLAs)," said Martin. "When we get a request, such as label-printing from a customer warehouse, we need to be able to respond to it immediately. Pure Storage has allowed us to be more responsive, and for a business likes ours, which operates globally and around the clock, this is a huge benefit."

While the relationship with Pure Storage is still relatively new, Martin expects that Centiro will begin seeing the effects of the transition to smart storage in his division's financial performance as the cost efficiency and resourcing benefits become more apparent.

"While it's too early in to quantify costs, we are already seeing a massive difference in how we manage operations. As a relatively small team, we have no full-time storage administrators. Previously most of our array management was outsourced to consultants. In the six months since we began working with Pure Storage, we've had no requirement for external consultancy, and maintenance has not been a time-consuming process," said Martin.

"Our data deduplication rate ranges from 3.8 to 4.1, meaning we can restore databased and snapshot databased without taking up any additional space. The time that would previously have been spent on such tasks can now be focused on other priorities."

From an energy consumption perspective, Martin has also noted that the power required to run the FlashArrays is around a quarter of the previous system.

"We've gone from 24U of rack space consumed down to 3U, which is a considerable reduction in physical space and is supporting our organisational commitment to energy saving."

Martin concluded: "As our company continues to grow, it is reassuring to know that we have a storage solution that will keep pace with, and indeed enhance, our future development."

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