

AGR, a leading business in the oil and gas sector, uses Pure Storage® FlashArray for a faster and more predictable environment in a volatile and challenging industry landscape. Replacing its legacy storage with FlashArray//M20 has allowed AGR to run three streams — virtualisation, reservoir management, and office management — from a single rack, with 33% faster processing and three times faster data transfer speeds.



BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Greater performance and cost predictability across the business allowed AGR to adopt new applications and services and better plan for future expansion in a volatile industry landscape. Storage is now a simple and seamless part of the IT team's function, allowing them to better allocate the time they would otherwise have spent on maintenance.

GEO

Norway

INDUSTRY

Oil and Gas

“The Pure Storage projections sounded ambitious, yet they had little doubt about being able to deliver. The confidence in what their technology could do for our business was both reassuring and infectious.”

Mike Christensen, *Global IT Manager*

AGR RUNS GLOBAL OPERATIONS FROM SINGLE STORAGE UNIT

AGR is a leading well construction, HSEQ, reservoir and field management service company, providing a range of software, logistics and consultancy services for clients globally. Headquartered in Norway, the company's operations span six continents, including offices in Houston, Texas, and Perth, Australia.

Mike Christensen, AGR's Global IT Manager, is based in the company's Aberdeen office and is responsible for managing IT operations across the organisation.

Data storage plays a critical part in maintaining AGR's technology infrastructure. This is composed of two distinct purposes: virtualisation (served through VMware architecture), Reservoir Management (including seismic models), and standard office management. Mike's office maintains the storage to supply these services to all areas and users.

Before working with Pure Storage, AGR used NetApp systems, with its datacentre composed of a combination of SAS and SATA spinning disk-based storage. While this solution largely served its purpose, by late-2015, the hardware was starting to show its age, and Mike was receiving general complaints within the business around the speed of operations.

“It was apparent that our storage was struggling,” Mike said. “It was becoming a bottleneck in our business and it wasn't economical to maintain. With the current challenges in the oil and gas sector, efficiency and budget control are always key considerations.”

THE TRANSITION FROM SPINNING DISK TO ALL-FLASH

With these criteria in mind, Mike began the search for a new storage solution. Interested in pursuing an all-flash solution, he invited proof of concept (POC) from a number of prominent suppliers, with Pure Storage among those approached.

Mike had first encountered Pure Storage at a Scot-Tech event, and subsequently had preliminary discussions with the sales team on what they were capable of delivering.

“In honesty, it all sounded too good to be true. I knew that replacing spinning disks with Solid State Disks (SSDs) would be significant change, but the Pure Storage projections sounded ambitious, yet they had little doubt about being able to deliver. The confidence in what their technology could do for our business was both reassuring and infectious.”

COMPANY:

AGR
www.AGR.com

USE CASE:

- VSI – VMware® vSphere®
- Database – Microsoft® SQL Server
- Office Management

CHALLENGES:

- Performance was slow on the hybrid system.
- AGR needed greater cost control and predictability in this volatile sector.
- AGR was unable to implement and run new business applications.

IT TRANSFORMATION:

- Data processing is now faster by 33%.
- Data transfer speeds are 3X faster.
- Storage unit was reduced from 10U to 3U.

Integral to the relationship was the support of Seric, AGR's channel partner. Seric had made the initial introduction with Pure Storage and played an instrumental role in the implementation of the POC.

"Seric's involvement was integral to the relationship with Pure Storage. They knew what Pure Storage technology could do for our business, and lent crucial support in those early stages."

The POC was completed in early 2016, running for a three-month period, leading to the installation of a FlashArray//M20 unit, which now runs AGR's full workload.

"The installation process went really smoothly. It was all done in one day, with no downtime. It was such an intuitive process that we did a lot of the installation ourselves."

"What stood out from Pure Storage was that the delivery matched the promises. Every vendor makes claims about deduplication figures, but Pure Storage did actually deliver significant deduplication savings. The performance is excellent.

"We've had no bottlenecks, compared with our previous set up. We've had predictable performance. Where we've seen the greatest improvement is in the virtual environment. There's been a real shift in quality."

LOW MAINTENANCE, HIGH PERFORMANCE

For AGR, one of the major benefits of the new storage ecosystem has been the lack of requirement for maintenance. Mike operates a small team, with no dedicated storage engineer, and therefore needed a low maintenance solution.

"SSD means good performance. There's no need for many of the things you'd need to do on a hybrid array. It's really simple to keep running. It hasn't required continual engineer work. Even when Pure Storage provided a system upgrade, it required no downtime and was carried out with Pure Storage support.

"We've found the system reliable and consistent. We operate at 80 percent usage, so the box is consistently monitored. It's reassuring to have that level of proactive support."

SEAMLESS, MORE PREDICTABLE PERFORMANCE

The improvements in storage performance have been clearly felt across the business, according to Mike.

"The most obvious benefit has been the increase in speed. We're seeing a 33% increase in performance on our virtualisation operations, including our SQL solutions, which is really noticeable. Against traditional spinning disk, data transfer speeds have tripled resulting in significant software performance increases when working with large datasets.

"All of this provides a huge time-saving benefit, which is helping to improve staff productivity."

Thankfully, for Mike, this enhanced performance hasn't come at the expense of a cumbersome data centre.

“We’ve now got greater speed and cost predictability, which is a strong foundation for delivering our services in a volatile landscape. This has been well received by our executives, particularly our CFO, who can plan ahead without any major bumps in the road.”

Mike Christensen, *Global IT Manager*

“The new infrastructure has also improved our spatial efficiency. We’ve reduced from 10U rack space with NetApp to 3U with Pure Storage, which is far more manageable.”

UNDERPINNING FAST, SEAMLESS GLOBAL OPERATIONS

“Overall, I’d say that we’ve experienced three key benefits of moving to Pure Storage. Firstly, we’ve now got greater speed and cost predictability, which is a strong foundation for delivering our services in a volatile landscape. This has been well received by our executives, particularly our CFO, who can plan ahead without any major bumps in the road. The three-year upgrades that come as part of the Pure Evergreen™ Storage model guarantee also help in this regard.

“Secondly, and consequently, we’re now able to look at implementing and running business solutions we wouldn’t have previously, such as virtualising reservoir management software, as the strong storage layer underpins developments in all aspects of the business.

“Finally, we’re in a position to virtualise more workloads on desktop, which helps us to create a more modern, productive working environment. Feedback on running speeds across all environments has been really positive.

“The benefits to cost and efficiency will only become more apparent in the longer term as our relationship with Pure Storage continues to progress.”



info@purestorage.com
www.purestorage.com/customers