

QNET relies on more than five million distributors worldwide to fuel the growth of its direct-sales business model. Calculating compensation for these distributors is a critical application, and was straining the capabilities of the company's legacy storage system. After installing a Pure Storage FlashArray™, the time required to calculate compensation has been cut by more than half and operating costs for storage are much lower.

QNET

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

The business-critical compensation-calculation application is completed in less than half the time, ensuring that the company can continue to grow and freeing up IT staff resources.

GEO

Hong Kong

INDUSTRY

E-commerce

“The Pure Storage FlashArray provides a complete solution for storage management.”

Henry Lai, *Head of IT Data Management*

QNET GAINS SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN STORAGE PERFORMANCE, SCALABILITY AND COST-SAVINGS

QNET is a subsidiary of QI Group, a diversified Hong Kong-based multinational company that operates a variety of businesses in more than 30 countries. QNET is an e-commerce company focused on retail and direct sales. The company has over five million distributors worldwide, a number that grows daily. Distributors are placing orders online every day, 24/7, which means the company demands high performance, stability and scalability from its IT infrastructure and storage system.

One of the company's most critical applications is a compensation system that calculates commissions and rank for distributors. In use for over 17 years, the database used for the system has grown to such a size that overall performance can slow considerably whenever data is queried or transferred.

QNET's legacy spinning-disk storage system had reached the limits of its capacity in terms of both performance and scalability, with no opportunity for improvement. New technologies and applications, such as SAP and e-commerce, had to be integrated with the compensation-plan system, placing further burdens on the storage platform.

“We were to the point that we weren't able to use the full functionality of some of these new applications,” recalled Henry Lai, Head of IT Data Management of QNET. “With all the challenges we faced, the company decided to search the market for a new storage solution that fulfilled all our needs.”

CONSOLIDATING WORKLOADS, ACHIEVING HIGHER PERFORMANCE

After a thorough evaluation of alternatives, QNET settled on an all-flash solution from Pure Storage. “The Pure Storage FlashArray provides a complete solution, both hardware and software, for storage management,” Lai noted. “Specifically, it has eliminated our challenges with I/O performance bottlenecks and the need for extra rack space to support future expansion of storage capacity. All that at a very competitive price.”

QNET's previous storage system, with a capacity of 15 TB, occupied 1.5 racks in the data center. With the data-reduction features of the Pure Storage array, the company's data can be accommodated in 3TB requiring only 5U of rack space. “Not only does that save the cost of renting rack space, it also reduces long-term operating costs for maintenance and upgrades,” Lai noted.

COMPANY:

QNET
www.qnet.net

USE CASE:

- Database – Microsoft® SQL Server®

CHALLENGES:

- An aging storage system was unable to keep pace with growing demands, and offered no path to expansion or improvement.
- A business-critical application required the better part of a weekend to process, due to limited storage performance.

IT TRANSFORMATION:

- Processing time for critical compensation calculations cut by more than 55%.
- Rack space for storage reduced from 1.5 racks to 5U.
- Routine database maintenance is now performed more regularly.

“The Pure Storage array is just fantastic. It is as powerful and worry-free as promised.”

Henry Lai, *Head of IT Data Management*

The most notable improvement seen since installation of the Pure Storage array has been in the performance and reliability of the critical commission-calculation application. “Previously, our commission calculation would take 30 hours to complete during the weekend,” Lai observed. “Using Pure Storage, the runtime has been reduced to less than 15 hours, with no interruptions.”

The dramatic reduction in processing time “gives us the confidence that we will be able to support the future business growth,” Lai noted. It also has made the IT staff members who oversee the calculation very happy, “because they have regained peace of mind over their weekend.”

SIMPLIFYING STORAGE MANAGEMENT

The performance improvements also have allowed the IT staff to perform routine database maintenance more frequently — an average of twice a month compared to previously, when it was performed once every two months due to the complexity and size of the database.

IT staff members also have been impressed by the ease with which the Pure Storage FlashArray is managed. “The management portal is much easier to use compared to what they were experiencing with the previous storage technology,” Lai added. “Data compression and de-duplication on the Pure Storage system have been much better, as well. With the superior performance and industry-leading data reduction capability that gives an advantage on price-per-GB storage, we will definitely leverage Pure Storage for our data warehouse solution.”

Lai concluded, “The Pure Storage array is just fantastic. It is as powerful and worry-free as promised.”

The all-flash experience proved to be a satisfactory one for QNET. “It is a rare scene for an IT upgrade to be so universally praised across our employees and IRs, but I think Pure Storage just succeeded in making one for us. With a solution so powerful and can be managed so effortlessly, there is little more we could’ve asked for from Pure,” said Malcolm Chiu, QNET’s CIO.



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