

Accent Automatisering is a hosting and IT services provider that looks after every aspect of its clients' technology needs, from telephony and office systems to cloud services. With a particular focus on SMEs, healthcare, and education, Accent is constantly seeking innovative solutions to provide added value to its clients. With their existing storage systems nearing capacity and an important project in the pipeline, Accent worked with local partner 1Appliance to find a solution. After deploying Pure Storage, Accent has cut its energy and data center costs whilst boosting customer satisfaction at the same time. Effectively, its storage environment is no longer a worry.



BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Pure Storage is helping Accent realize data center annual savings of up to €60,000 and benefit from increased performance resulting in higher customer satisfaction for its customers.

GEO

The Netherlands

INDUSTRY

IT services, Hosting/Web

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Eduard Vrieling, *Owner and CTO*

DUTCH IT SERVICES PROVIDER RELIES ON PURE STORAGE FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE WORKPLACE AUTOMATION AND VIRTUALIZATION

Accent Automatisering in Sneek, the Netherlands, is a full-service IT business that lightens the technological burden for small and medium-sized enterprises, healthcare organizations, and schools. It provides complete solutions encompassing fixed-line and mobile telephony, VoIP, CCTV, PIN protection, and network infrastructure. Founded in 1995, the company now employs 30 people. As well as offering a complete service desk, with 24/7 monitoring if required, Accent focuses on total workplace automation using virtual PCs and thin clients. For this it relies upon HP servers, Cisco network devices and – for the past two years – flash storage systems from Pure Storage. For virtualization, Accent currently relies on VMware®, and exploring the possibilities offered by Microsoft® Hyper-V.

BETTER PERFORMANCE WITH MORE STORAGE CAPACITY

Accent's existing storage system was nearing the limits of its capacity. The firm also needed to take a leap forward in terms of performance. Realizing that expansion of current systems would not be possible, it went in search of alternatives. A business partner pointed the company in the direction of Pure Storage. After a brief hunt for a Dutch partner, it found 1Appliance in Almere (Netherlands). This turned out to be a perfect match, says Eduard Vrieling, Accent's owner and CTO. “We contacted 1Appliance and explained our storage needs. Because we had an important project in the pipeline, what we really wanted was a meeting within a week to explore the options. Our one condition was that they bring along a fully functioning demo system so that we could see how Pure Storage would perform for us in a real environment. They were able to arrange that. 1Appliance pulled a demo unit from its local warehouse and connected it to our data center platforms. Within a week we knew that Pure Storage offered us exactly what we were looking for, so we decided to buy an FA-405 system. That was probably the quickest deal Pure Storage has ever made!”

One of the things that makes Pure Storage stand out, according to Vrieling, is its use of innovative techniques to improve performance. Normally, for example, a flash storage system is configured in such a way that data cannot be read and written simultaneously. But Pure Storage has overcome that limitation with the aid of some smart technology and fast processors. “As a result,” Vrieling continues, “we achieve consistently high read speeds, however much data is being written at the same time. I think that's brilliant.” On top of that, Pure Storage's advanced deduplication techniques ensure optimum use of the available storage capacity without impacting system performance. Far more data can be stored virtually than the physical capacity would seem to allow. The system

COMPANY:

Accent Automatisering
www.accent.nl

USE CASE:

- VDI – VMware® Horizon®
- VSI – VMware vSphere

CHALLENGES:

- Urgent need for increased storage capacity
- Demand for higher storage performance
- Need for reliable data center replication

IT TRANSFORMATION:

- Hardware upgrades and 'pay as you grow' licensing
- Almost 50% reduction in data center rack space

“Pure Storage delivers the performance it promises. If a client calls to say that his solution isn't performing at its best for some reason, we know we don't need to look at the Pure Storage systems. We did with our old storage systems”

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configurations also offer benefits on a regular basis. “With Pure Storage,” Vrieling explains, “linking a new virtual storage volume to a server is just a matter of a few mouse clicks. That saves us a whole lot of time and planning. And thanks to the high performance of the Pure Storage solution, we can produce a 1:1 clone of a volume very quickly. We can have a new server ready for operation within 20 seconds.”

FLEXIBILITY THROUGH LICENSING

For Vrieling, another advantage of Pure Storage is the way it licenses its systems. “At first we only needed part of the functionality and capacity offered by the FA-405. Pure Storage offered us the opportunity to enter at low price, only paying for what we were actually using at that point. Later we were able to acquire more components, simply by buying a supplementary license. We already had the hardware, so we could start using it immediately. That kind of flexibility is what sets Pure Storage apart from the rest of the market.”

Before implementing this new solution, Accent operated 21 server racks at a data center in Groningen. Now almost everything is virtualized, with the bulk of the infrastructure – most notably the front-end terminal servers – running on Pure Storage. “Without that we could never have virtualized so extensively at this kind of cost,” says Vrieling, “Placing a rack in a data center costs €500 per “tile” per month. Thanks in part to the Pure Storage system, we now need ten tiles fewer. That's a direct saving of €60.000 annually, just on space, energy and cooling.”

GREATER CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

According to Vrieling, Pure Storage delivers the performance it promises. What is really great, though, is that it is a “fire-and-forget” solution. “You connect it up and you don't even have to look at the performance – that is just as good as you would expect it to be. If a client calls to say that his solution isn't performing at its best for some reason, we know we don't need to look at the Pure Storage systems. We did with our old storage systems.” In fact, most of the external feedback is positive. Clients have noticed that some important processes are now considerably faster. For example, overnight database runs that used to finish only just before 7am now complete up to 90 minutes earlier. That leaves more time to do other important tasks and so has improved customer satisfaction.

Following its initial investment in an FA-405, a few months later Accent decided to buy an additional Pure Storage system. This was in response to a specific request from a client, which wanted the firm to set up a remote backup site for its data center. “One of the key requirements for that kind of alternate location is rapid data replication,” says Vrieling. “Because of our excellent experience with the FA-405, we again opted for a Pure Storage system. With its smart

1APPLIANCE: A TRUE ADDED-VALUE PARTNER

Vrieling also praises the partnership with 1Appliance. “They really put their heads together with ours to think about how best to approach things, and they're very proactive in the remote monitoring of our Pure Storage environment. We once even received a call on a Sunday advising us to check something because a warning had been triggered. And if they don't know the answer, they contact engineers in US straight away. That gives us confidence, in both 1Appliance and Pure Storage.” The relationship is now so strong that 1Appliance and Accent have started joint business development activities, working together to compile optimum propositions for prospective customers.

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PLUS POINT: UPGRADE OPPORTUNITIES

Vrieling is very pleased his company chose Pure Storage. “The performance is excellent, our data center costs are substantially lower, and we hardly have to think about our storage systems anymore. We know they’re going to do what we expect them to.” Accent is set to recoup the cost of its investment in its new FA-420 systems within two years. It has also signed a five-year maintenance contract with 1Appliance. “Another good thing about Pure Storage,” Vrieling concludes, “is that they keep the units up to date throughout the length of that contract through their Evergreen Storage program. If they develop a newer, faster controller, for example, we can have that as an upgrade at no extra cost. That’s a real plus point compared with systems from our old storage supplier, which can’t be upgraded.”



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