

Gruppo Castelli, a leading business in the manufacturing of cheeses and Italian dairy products, uses Pure Storage FlashArray™ technology to support business continuity, guaranteeing high availability of data and system upgrades without service interruption. Additionally, the green impact of the storage, with a reduction in electrical consumption of more the 30% compared to other solutions, is an important factor for the company's mission. The future of Gruppo Castelli is marked by two key words — innovation and consolidation — for which storage will be an important part of its global IT strategy.



BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Gruppo Castelli has decided to open up to global markets thanks to cutting-edge storage solutions, in such a way as to maintain its track record of excellence and offering not only products, but also comprehensive services for promoting “Made In Italy” cheese globally.

GEO

Italy

INDUSTRY

Food

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Michele Gottardi, *IT Manager*

BUSINESS CONTINUITY FOR AN EXPANDING COMPANY

Gruppo Castelli is a leading business in the manufacturing of PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) cheeses and Italian dairy products with the TSG (Traditional Speciality Guaranteed) denomination, with a tradition that began in 1892 as a producer of gorgonzola, and a presence in the major markets world-wide. Revenues exceed 500 million euros and in 2014 the private equity firm Charterhouse Capital purchased a stake in Gruppo Castelli with the objective of improving the efficiency of the management structure and consolidating leadership in the market of PDO products. More recently, Gruppo Castelli acquired Alival, a leader in the sector of stretched curd cheeses, and North Coast, a business specializing in the distribution of high quality food products. Gruppo Castelli, in addition to cheese manufacturing, also operates in the distribution and packaging areas, and boasts a strong presence at the most important and prestigious trade shows in the sector. Besides being a host at Expo Milano 2015 in the “Cibus Is Italy” pavilion, Gruppo Castelli was also present at the Parma Trade Show for this year's Cibus Exhibition.

The challenge for a company like Gruppo Castelli is business continuity of the computer services that support production. Gruppo Castelli is involved in the manufacturing and packaging of cheeses of particular prestige, recognized in markets throughout the world for their quality, with constantly active packaging lines in the production facilities. These are connected with the product storage warehouse, updated in real time with quantities available when the product is weighed and packaged. The lines are controlled by Programmable Logic Controllers (PLC's) – computers specializing in the management and control of the industrial processes – which send data to the applications on the Pure Storage systems that manage operations, closing out the production cycle. In this process, it is essential for Gruppo Castelli to have total availability of the applications and data. Without total availability, there is risk of a production halt with direct impact on the business.

“Continuity of the production processes is essential for us. For this reason, we need to elevate business continuity to the system level, first of all in regard to IT systems,” explained the company's IT Manager, Michele Gottardi. Gruppo Castelli has relationships with foreign subsidiaries, and a strong commercial presence in the USA, France, the United Kingdom, and Scandinavia, while future expansion plans involve the immense Asian market and Russia. In other countries, such as Poland and Ireland, the company's commercial presence is managed through the network of distributors. “Gruppo Castelli has a precise mission and vision,” emphasized Stefano Ziliotti, Marketing and Trade

COMPANY:

Gruppo Castelli
<https://castelligroup.com/>

USE CASE:

- VMware® vSphere®

CHALLENGES:

- Guarantee business continuity and avoid server downtime.
- Reduce electrical consumption and optimize performance, including “greener” resource management.
- Consolidate the company’s IT structure with a single storage solution to simplify data management and optimize the use of resources.

IT TRANSFORMATION:

- Outsourcing has been reduced to zero.
- Resources dedicated to the maintenance of storage has been reduced by about 80%.
- The energy consumption of the Pure Storage solution is now about 600 watts, a notable savings compared to the prior 3 kw.
- Maintenance is now performed solely during work hours, and does not require the overtime that occurred previously.

“Pure Storage all-flash technology was a deciding factor in making our choice.”

Oswaldo Cabra, *IT Operations Manager*

Marketing Director of Gruppo Castelli, “which is not only to be a manufacturer and distributor of products of excellence, including Parmigiano Reggiano, Grana Padano, Gorgonzola, Taleggio, Pecorino Toscano, Mozzarella di Bufala Campana and Traditional Mozzarella, but to move forward into the market as a true partner for its clients, a partner with the ability to offer the widest assortment possible, and to provide ideas for combinations between products. In summary, we see ourselves as a big player for promoting a new culture of taste, especially abroad.”

The company has finalized a prestigious collaboration with Gambero Rosso to propose food and wine suggestions and combinations, starting with its own cheeses. Also included in this strategy is a commitment to innovation, through a constantly proactive corporate attitude in the area of trends and the demands of the market, along with strong attention to the company’s green dimension. This last item is put into practice in the packaging phase, for example, where Gruppo Castelli implemented recyclable packages. Also in this area, the attention toward the customer is evident, by putting into practice clear information, displayed on the packages, regarding the nutritional information and the principal ingredients of the product. “Our objective,” Ziliotti added, “is to unite the prestige of the ‘Made In Italy’ products of excellence with our international commitment. 70% of the revenue of Gruppo Castelli is realized thanks to export, while 90% of the production sites are located in our country.”

To support the mission and vision of the enterprise, Information & Communication Technology can therefore play an important role. Storage, as a pillar in every company’s IT strategy, is a key factor for creating a foundation for success. “The selection phase, which allowed us to evaluate every solution taken into consideration, among those NetApp, Dell, and Pure Storage, pointed us directly toward choosing Pure,” explained IT Manager Michele Gottardi. One of the winning characteristics of Pure, observed the manager, was the technological factor; that is, the fact that it was a solution with “the ability to evolve” in that it was not based on mechanical disks, a difference from the other brands’ offerings.

“Pure Storage all-flash technology was a deciding factor in making our choice,” added the IT Operations Manager of the company, Oswaldo Cabra.

The deployment occurred in the month of January and was completed within a few days. The workload consisted of data processed by the management system, Microsoft Navision, and when it came to performing an upgrade from Pure Storage FlashArray//M10R2 to M20R2, there was no interruption of service. “The key phrase for us is ‘high availability’, meaning the constant availability of data to avoid any production halt and reduction of the risk of server incidents to nearly zero.”

The business continuity advantages are also reflected in the reduction of computer infrastructure maintenance costs and streamlining of dedicated resources: “Since we implemented the deployment of Pure Storage, outsourcing has been reduced to zero, while the resources dedicated to the maintenance of storage has been reduced by about 80%. This means we can devote more time and energy into other activities.”

CONTINUITY OFFERS SAVINGS, EFFICIENCY, AND STREAMLINING OF RESOURCES

Pure Storage has brought diverse benefits. In the first place, the goal of continuity was achieved perfectly, but the advantages were also evident in the areas of savings, efficiency, and streamlining of resources.

“For us the theme of sustainability is particularly important, because it is a part of the overall corporate image,” added Stefano Ziliotti. “The company’s new buildings in Reggio Emilia were, by design, constructed employing modern criteria of energy use and make the most of new technologies. We’re talking about electricity savings, Wi-Fi, and

reduction of CO2 emissions. These results are the fruit of a global corporate strategy, geared toward efficiency and optimization of consumables, of which the IT infrastructure is a part.”

The energy consumption of the Pure Storage solution is now about 600 watts, a notable savings compared to the prior 3 kw. The latency time for data access is three milliseconds, the de-duplication factor is 4:1, and the space occupied by the previous storage — five units per site — has been reduced to three per site.

Furthermore, maintenance is now performed solely during work hours, and does not require the overtime that occurred previously. Oswaldo Cabra, IT Operations Director of Gruppo Castelli, highlighted the principal advantages of the Pure Storage implementation at Gruppo Castelli as continuity, performance, and pre- and post-sale support. “The Pure team,” Cabra emphasized “is truly very proactive and supports us with professionalism and dedication, and provides us with timely notification of any anomalies.”

Simplicity in the deployment phase is another much-appreciated factor of the Pure Storage solutions, as noted by many customers. Cabra confirms this point, and speaks of “simplicity in the configuration and preparation of the installation phase of the software, because the system is based on an intuitive and user-friendly graphical interface.” If it is true that every brand is a promise, not only a product, the promises of Pure Storage were fully kept, to the satisfaction of its customers. “We think that Pure can accompany us in the future phases of our commercial expansion, to support us in the construction of a constantly more modern and customized relationship with the market, thanks to the value that can be extracted from the data.”

CONSOLIDATION AND INNOVATION

The future, for Gruppo Castelli, seems to be marked by innovation — made possible by IT — and the consolidation of the company. As far as innovation, the company talks of the goal of establishing itself in the role of “advanced player” that, in addition to products, anticipates proposals and suggestions, including those of commercial partners and other supply chain players, for constantly improving services. “We want to establish ourselves as protagonists in our sector, and to this aim we must also have a modern technological infrastructure that keeps pace with the times to manage all phases of production in the best way possible,” said Gottardi.

Regarding the consolidation of Gruppo Castelli, the manager instead spoke of consolidating the processing of data with the ERP currently in use, which already carries three quarters of the workload, while the rest is processed on different systems. “We will carry out an ultra-structural consolidation of all corporate data, relying on Navision for the Enterprise Resource Planning portion and on Pure Storage for the data storage. Pure will therefore be one of the pillars of the future evolution of our business.”

The consolidation will be completed on the systems of Gruppo Castelli’s new Reggio Emilia headquarters, thereby optimizing the distribution of resources and simplifying the management of the computer infrastructure. “In today’s competitive environment, simplicity and efficiency are the keys to success,” concluded the manager. “We want to unite the Italian culture of taste with the power of the most advanced IT, in order to reach our goals of success well into the future.”

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