PURESTORAGE®

Southampton FC, a top-tier English professional soccer club, uses Pure Storage to achieve excellence across sporting and commercial operations. The club uses FlashArray to join up data from every aspect of the club for optimum performance on and off the field.

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Using Pure Storage, Southampton FC has the performance and IT resource to pursue ambitious data initiatives that will transform its sporting and commercial potential, helping it to compete at the highest level of professional soccer.

GEO

United Kingdom

INDUSTRY

Sports

"What I liked from the very start was the simplicity to manage. We migrated all servers in real-time in the space of a day."

Matthew Reynolds, _IT Director_

BUILDING A WINNING TEAM WITH PURE STORAGE

Southampton FC is a professional soccer club based on the south coast of England. A founding member of the English Premier League — one of the world's most prestigious club competitions — the club has established its position among the league's top teams through a dedicated focus on player development, underpinned by the club's acclaimed youth academy.

Competing against big city rivals such as Chelsea, Liverpool, and Manchester United, the club has had to take a smart approach in how it gets the most out of its resources, and has invested in infrastructure to help it compete at the highest level.

Matthew Reynolds, Southampton FC's IT Director, joined the club in 2011 to oversee its digital transformation. He heads an IT team with an ambitious strategy to deliver business aligned IT services, covering all sporting, commercial, and retail operations.

"In a modern, globally-oriented football club, the focus far exceeds what's happening on the pitch. We need to have a digital strategy behind everything we do from training our under-nines youth team to managing the matchday experience and engaging with fans in all corners of the world," Matthew said.

"Data has been a core part of this. As a club, we want to be able to analyse, measure, and optimise every aspect of our operations, from discovering the latest hot prospects in our youth teams, through to helping senior players make a faster recovery from injury. We see this as a huge opportunity to differentiate from the other clubs in the league," he added.

Matthew has been overseeing the development of a data science project, which involves centralising all sporting and commercial data, empowering the club's team of data scientists and analysts to turn information into actionable insights to drive better performance. He was aware from the outset that to achieve its ambitions, the club would need to have high performance and cost effectiveness built into its storage layer.

Until 2016, the club's data centre used a legacy storage array to manage operations. The solution was quickly running out of storage capacity, and Matthew was concerned about the performance and capability of mechanical disks to realise the club's long-term ambitions. With the increasing need to upgrade his storage, he began looking into alternatives.

COMPANY:

Southampton FC
https://southamptonfc.com

USE CASE:

- Applications: IT and business application servers
- Database: Microsoft® SQL

CHALLENGES:

- Existing systems were running out of storage space.
- Data-intensive requirements needed longer term vision and initiatives.

IT TRANSFORMATION:

- Average application performance increased 37%.
- SQL server query waits were reduced by 50%.
- Average data reduction improved to 2.7:1 across all applications.

> "We chose Pure Storage because we want to work with best of breed technology that can deliver information at optimum speeds."
>
> Matthew Reynolds, *IT Director*

"I was well aware of Pure Storage and its position on Gartner's Magic Quadrant, and had heard positive reviews from colleagues in the industry. The possibilities associated with flash storage seemed much more in line with the project we were building."

In the summer of 2016, Matthew attended the Pure Live event in London's Canary Wharf to get a greater feel for the company and its product offering. He met with Pure Storage representatives soon after to discuss how its technology could help Southampton FC achieve better sporting performance, in the way it had done with other Pure customers, such as Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport.

"What impressed me most was the culture. As an organisation we seek to partner with companies that share our values. It was immediately clear with Pure Storage that our organisations shared a 'market disruptor' attitude that instantly made us strategically aligned."

SIMPLIFIED MANAGEMENT A STAR ATTRIBUTE

Convinced that the Pure Storage offering matched with Southampton's vendor selection criteria, Matthew made the investment to have two FlashArray arrays installed in October 2016. The full migration took place in early November, with all production workloads drives being transferred to the Pure Storage arrays.

"What I liked from the very start was the simplicity to manage. After a short testing period we migrated all servers in real-time. The majority being carried out within business hours, with no user interruption or downtime."

The Pure Storage solution now manages three key areas of Southampton's operations: IT application services (including service management capabilities and monitoring systems), business application services, and SQL databases.

HIGH PERFORMANCE ACROSS MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS

The performance Matthew and his team have seen across different areas of the business has exceeded expectations. The average application performance has increase by 37%. Average SQL database query time has dropped by 50%.

The performance benefits have been accompanied by strong data reduction. Matthew has seen an average data reduction of 2.7:1 across all applications, including 7.1:1 across accounts services, 9.6:1 in payroll, 2.3:1 in workforce management systems, and 5.9:1 in IT service management systems.

"The difference across applications has just been incredible. We can commission storage quicker and easier, report faster, and manage alerts easier. It's given us a superior environment to work in."

While performance and simplicity have been key benefits for Matthew's team, the greatest benefit of working with Pure Storage is the potential for better decision-making across the business.

"Our IT team is freed from administrative duties, so we're able to allocate more time to initiatives that add values to other areas of the business.

"As an IT department, we want to be able to deliver the right information to the right people in the fastest possible time. We chose Pure Storage because we want to work with best of breed technology that can deliver information at optimum speeds."

"With the FlashArray in place we have invested for the long term. Our data will only get richer over time and now our data scientists have the right tools."

After six months of working with Pure Storage, Matthew has no doubt he made the correct decision.

"The Pure Storage technology is amazing. It just works so well. It's quick to move from development into production, and we can commission additional storage when needed. We also love working with great people that share the same values. The Pure Storage staff have a great attitude, are proactive in their support, and the speed of response is fantastic.

SIMPLIFIED MANAGEMENT A HUGE BENEFIT

"Additionally, having low administrative requirements is a huge benefit for a team like ours. Storage management used to be a burden on overheads, but the beauty of Pure Storage technology is that the role can be absorbed into the converged infrastructure engineer's role. Our staff's expertise allowed us to rapidly ramp up knowledge and utilise Pure to its fullest.

"We report on performance to the senior executives at the club, so they can see the value of the investment. They require the information fast and that is exactly what Pure Storage delivers.

"Looking ahead, we expect the financial benefits will become more evident through the Pure Evergreen™ Storage model, which gives us an upgrade path to the latest technology available, while creating long term cost saving by eliminating the need for forklift upgrades.

"We're really happy with our choice to move to Pure Storage."

"Our ultimate vision is to be a more connected business, using data for strategic differentiation. Storage is a big part of that... This will be our competitive advantage."

Matthew Reynolds, *IT Director*

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