PURESTORAGE®

Prévifrance looked at virtualization, an attractive technology for a company of its size, but found it to be terribly disappointing and a real handicap when storage turned into a bottleneck. The health insurance company overcame this unpleasant situation and boosted the productivity of its employees by opting for 100% Flash arrays from Pure Storage.

Mutuelle Prévifrance

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Pure Storage has helped Prévifrance increase overall employee and IT productivity, reduce costs, and provide a highly available infrastructure.

GEO

France

INDUSTRY

Insurance

"Pure Storage performed impressively according to every criterion, and made our decision very easy to make!"

Loïc Magnagnon,
technical support manager

PURE STORAGE ASSURES VIRTUALIZATION FOR PRÉVIFRANCE WITH NO LOSS OF PERFORMANCE

Prévifrance is one of the top 30 supplementary health insurance companies in France, with annual sales of €150 million, and a net profit of €6.4 million in 2014. As a major player in the health insurance sector, Prévifrance employs more than 360 people on its sites in South West France and its 34 branch offices. With a history that dates back to 1931, this supplementary health insurance company currently provides health insurance for almost 250,000 people, and welfare coverage for 100,000. In addition to its core activities, the insurer also offers its customers a complete range of savings, pensions and property insurance products.

In 2010, Prévifrance virtualized 99% of its servers with VMware and 95% of its workstations with VMware® Horizon®. At the start, the rotary disk storage array was sufficiently well calibrated to faultlessly launch the virtualization, but the situation has gradually worsened. The array became saturated, resulting in a degraded environment that impacted both production operations and the user workstations.

After reviewing the marketplace, Prévifrance discovered the qualities of the 100% flash storage arrays, and decided to organize a feasibility demonstration by testing two of the leading players on the market, one of which was Pure Storage. The two competing arrays were installed at the same time, and Prévifrance conducted its tests in parallel.

Initially, the assessment looked at the performance of the arrays and at how they reacted in times of stress. "Pure Storage clearly had the upper hand in terms of pure performance, but we realized that, in the world of Flash storage and its breakneck speeds, this is not the most important criterion, at least not for our information system," declared Loïc Magnagnon, who is in charge of technical support at Prévifrance.

So the insurer switched all of its virtualized workstations, its transactional servers, and the servers hosting its databases, to each one of the competing storage arrays, one after the other. "In this way, we were able to make sure that we had made the right technical choice, that the benefits promised by the manufacturers were real, and that the solution achieved a better rate of data reduction," said Loïc Magnagnon. "This point is essential when calculating the cost per usable GB. Pure Storage performed impressively according to every criterion, and made our decision very easy to make!" The data reduction rate of 5.8 of the Pure Storage FlashArray was almost twice as high as the rate achieved by the competition.

COMPANY:

Prévifrance
www.purestorage.com/customers

USE CASE:

• VDI – VMware® Horizon®

CHALLENGES:

• Storage was a bottleneck.
• Array gradually became saturated, resulting in a degraded environment that impacted both production operations and user workstations.
• Users were reporting consistently slow response times.

IT TRANSFORMATION:

• Successfully migrated from existing rotary disks to FlashArray.
• Achieved a data reduction rate of 5.8.
• Time taken to process certain particularly complex batch processes has been divided by ten.

"The performance of the FlashArray is so good that it overcomes the problems posed by imperfect code."

Loïc Magnagnon,
technical support manager

ENTHUSIASTIC FEEDBACK FROM THE USERS

The FlashArray was installed without saying a word to the employees. The spontaneous and positive feedback about the performance of their virtual workstations confirmed that the insurer's technical staff had made the right choice. Slow performance, every day and every week, has become a thing of the past, and the time taken to process certain particularly complex batch processes has been divided by ten. "The management team, which also uses the same information system, was convinced that Pure Storage was the right choice, even before we presented our conclusions," said Loïc Magnagnon. "For this project, we easily found internal funding!"

The VDI environment driven by the FlashArray from Pure Storage has already proved its worth in many areas: very little time spent on administration, clear space savings with physical storage, and a much simpler client management.

PERFORMANCE AND DEDUPLICATION ARE ONLY THE VISIBLE PART OF THE PURE STORAGE ICEBERG

Pure Storage has always considered ease of use to be a top priority in the development of its products. In this particular case, Prévifrance installed the FlashArray and was totally operational in less than three hours.

The Forever Flash maintenance program also eased the worries of the IT staff at Prévifrance. This program includes software upgrades and regular hardware upgrades that help to keep the FlashArray in the vanguard of technology. And if capacity needs to be increased, the upgrade of the controllers is included at the best possible ROI.

For Prévifrance, the next step is to gradually migrate other business applications to the 100% flash storage array. "The performance of the FlashArray is so good that it overcomes the problems posed by imperfect code," Loïc Magnagnon explained. "The machine works so fast that we don't even notice the effects. As your applications age, your databases becomes bigger and bigger. But with the 100% Flash arrays, it feels like we have just installed a brand new application. It feels like we have rejuvenated our applications!"

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