

Model AG produces a wide range of innovative, high-value packaging solutions using corrugated paper and cardboard. When its legacy spinning-disk storage system reached its end of life, the company installed all-flash arrays from Pure Storage, which have sharply improved response times for business-critical applications and drastically cut the time the IT department spends managing storage.



BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Users of the mission-critical SAP system have fast, reliable access to the applications and data they rely on for efficient business operations. The IT staff spends less time on storage administration, and has a cost-efficient growth path for storage to support company expansion.

GEO

Switzerland

INDUSTRY

Processing sector

“We made the right buy with the all-flash system from Pure Storage. We are extremely pleased.”

Thomas Rebholz, *System Administrator*

PURE STORAGE SMOOTHS THE WAY TO DIGITIZATION

Model AG is one of the largest paper producers in the German-speaking world, with annual production of over 375,000 tons of corrugated paper and cardboard used to create innovative packaging solutions. The company, headquartered in Switzerland, also has operations in Poland and the Czech Republic, and has more than 4,000 employees.

Two paper factories and a development department depend on a reliable SAP infrastructure for order entry, procurement and production scheduling. Company growth, plus greater digitization, pushed the legacy spinning-disk storage system to its limits. “In recent years we have been able to increase corrugated paper production significantly, and also have enhanced our service and product portfolios. Our previous storage system had reached its capacity limits, and this could be felt in all departments and locations. To remain competitive and permit expansion, we needed a new storage system which could adapt to our requirements,” said Thomas Rebholz, System Administrator at Model.

FLASH STORAGE AFFORDABLE THANKS TO PURE STORAGE

Because its existing storage system offered no growth path, Model looked for a new solution that would be powerful, reliable and future-proof. Extremely high reliability was essential, as the company does not use a failover system. Established work processes and new digital printing equipment defined additional requirements. “We regularly swap out work processes for projects and jobs to different locations. Consequently, we need a storage infrastructure which makes data available to the applications quickly,” Rebholz noted. The production departments work with large CAD files which occupy a great deal of storage space and are highly complex. Applications must access the data, manipulate it and make it available to other departments without delay. From the IT viewpoint, new storage systems also needed to be provide data compression, deduplication, thin provisioning and snapshots.

In conjunction with ITRIS Enterprise AG, its long-term IT partner for system integration and data center solutions, Model examined only hybrid and all-flash solutions from established providers. “The risk of using a solution which had not been tried and tested was too great for us,” Rebholz explained. And because uninterrupted availability is of great importance for Model, ITRIS recommended that Pure Storage be included in the evaluation.

Hybrid storage solutions soon revealed their main weaknesses: They tend to swap important data into slow storage as soon as space is no longer available in flash.

COMPANY:

Model AG
www.modelgroup.com

USE CASE:

- Database – SAP® HANA SE; Microsoft® SQL Server
- VSI – VMware® vSphere® ESX

CHALLENGES:

- Legacy spinning-disk storage system was at end of life, offering no potential for expansion.
- Absence of failover system means storage must have ultra-high reliability.

IT TRANSFORMATION:

- Latencies reduced from 3-4 ms to 0.4 ms.
- Database backups created in one-third less time.

“The Pure Storage solution is fast, simple to handle, and extremely reliable. The support is also really excellent.”

Thomas Rebholz, *System Administrator*

Because consistent high-speed data access was one of Model’s main criteria, a preliminary decision was made in favor of an all-flash solution. “In the end it was simple. The all-flash solution of our previous provider was not only outside our financial capacity, it also failed to satisfy our requirements with respect to deduplication and compression. Pure Storage was clearly ahead both in terms of our catalog of requirements and cost-effectiveness,” Rebholz said. Pure Storage also impressed Model with its demonstrated reliability.

SIMPLIFIED MANAGEMENT IMPRESSES IT STAFF

Model installed two Pure Storage arrays, one each in Weinfelden, Switzerland, and Au, Poland. Each was installed and ready to be used in only about five hours, and Rebholz was able to migrate all data and applications to the new storage solution by himself.

The radically simplified management requirements of Pure Storage impressed Rebholz. “The Pure Storage solution is fast, simple to handle, and extremely reliable. The support is also really excellent. Help is there immediately if you need it, which further confirms our decision to go with Pure Storage.”

The first positive reactions to the significantly higher speed of the new storage infrastructure came from the SAP basic administration: System copies were created with the Pure Storage array in some cases in just a matter of minutes. Even larger systems were duplicated, modified, and integrated into a new environment during just one weekend when there was less load on production.

The FlashArrays impressed Rebholz and his team with low latency times and high IOPS. Whereas response times of three to four milliseconds were the rule, latency on the Pure Storage system is 0.4 milliseconds. “On the first day after the switchover to Pure Storage, colleagues told us that the systems are noticeably quicker — and that is the biggest compliment a user can make to their IT administrator,” Rebholz reported. The flexibility and power of the flash storage is evident from the simultaneous operation of 100 virtual servers implemented using VMware ESX Hypervisor.

“We made the right buy with the all-flash system from Pure Storage,” Rebholz said. “By ensuring that critical data is made available quickly, we support the continued growth and profitability of Model. We are extremely pleased with the Pure Storage solution.”



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