



Success Story

Bank of Cyprus Ready for Digitization and the Cloud: 24/7 Uptime and Flexibility at Less Cost with NetApp



Another NetApp solution delivered by:



Photo: Bank of Cyprus

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Industry

Banking and financial services

The Challenge

Prepare for the digitized world of financial services.

The Solution

Up-level the data infrastructure with NetApp® hybrid systems, clustered Data ONTAP® software, and MetroCluster® software.

Benefits

- Saves €30,000 in energy costs per year
- Decreased storage footprint by 64%
- Reduced storage capacity by nearly 100 terabytes
- Achieved nondisruptive operations
- Improved performance with flash media
- Protects data seamlessly from disk to tape
- Is ready to explore and ramp up hybrid cloud services

Customer Profile

Founded in 1899 and headquartered in Nicosia, Bank of Cyprus (www.bankofcyprus.com) is the leading banking and financial services group in Cyprus. The bank provides a broad portfolio of products and services, including retail and commercial banking, finance, factoring, investment banking, brokerage, fund management, private banking, and life and general insurances. Since 2013, Bank of Cyprus consolidated its business. Many international engagements were sold or became fully independent. Today, Bank of Cyprus has around 4,000 employees and operates 160 branches and banking units in Cyprus and has insurance subsidiaries in Cyprus and Greece.

The Challenge

Prepare for digitization

The financial industry is under pressure. Customers are turning from Internet banking to smartphone banking and reducing the need for branch offices. New players such as insurtechs and fintechs bring more and new types of competition. The overall disruptive business climate even challenges national leaders such as Bank of Cyprus. The bank's CEO knows that digitization is the future and

started an initiative to transform both finance and technological processes at the bank. The company's group IT now has to strengthen and improve the bank's mobile capabilities and enable its IT technology for the cloud era.

Yiannakis Vakis, IT infrastructure manager at Bank of Cyprus, sees the benefits and the obstacles the cloud produces. "The cloud brings a lot of flexibility to an IT infrastructure," he says. "Even though in the European Union legal regulation of data privacy is strict and security is a real issue, the cloud is the future."

An IT team of more than 200 at the bank is in charge of a variety of applications. The applications are divided into two segments: legacy banking applications and open-systems applications based on NetApp unified storage for 70% of all data and over 800 virtual machines. "We were NetApp's first customer in Cyprus," says Vakis. "Since 2002, NetApp has helped us solve many data management tasks. When we updated the infrastructure to increase performance and availability, there was no doubt that we would choose again a NetApp solution."

The Solution

Up-level for business continuity

The IT team selected NetApp FAS8000 hybrid systems with the NetApp clustered Data ONTAP operating system and NetApp MetroCluster software. The storage runs in an active-active configuration with cross replication across two sites. Though data was replicated before, this step went beyond disaster recovery and tapped business continuity. “We gained an almost instantaneous failover without the need to migrate systems,” says Vakis.

For the infrastructure update, Vakis’s engineers teamed with experts from COMIT Solutions and NetApp. “COMIT won our tender. Though the company was new to us, everything turned out very well, and COMIT became an excellent partner,” says Vakis. The migration went smoothly. Only moving the VMware datastores from the old to the new NetApp storage was a bit of a challenge. However, thorough planning enabled a smooth process and ensured constant data access for the bank’s 4,000 users.

Consolidation saves floor space and reduced energy costs by €30,000

With the new storage, Bank of Cyprus saves almost 100 terabytes of capacity through deduplication, compression, and thin provisioning. The bank needs 64% less floor space and reduced its energy costs by €30,000 per year.

NetApp Snapshot® technology is still the first line of defense against data losses. This technology fits perfectly into the larger picture of disk and tape backup plus offline vaulting. By using new Data ONTAP features such as quality of service, the team can run applications with dedicated service levels. NetApp Flash Pool® intelligent caching leverages SAS disks and SSD media to provide so-called hot data with top flash performance automatically.

Business Benefits

Improved efficiency and gained cloud readiness

Nicolas Savva, officer storage and data protection at Bank of Cyprus, is very happy with the results. “The number of cabinets went down from 9 to 4, with a total of only 28 disk shelves instead of 83. We also benefit from simplicity, ease of use, and many advanced storage features. Two people can handle the storage platform easily,” says Savva. “And we can relax knowing that data replication is fully automated and site failover requires only a single command. We can even automate the disaster recovery process if an unplanned site failure occurs,” Savva adds.

To prove the infrastructure’s reliability, Vakis and his team ran a test: They moved a set of virtual machines to the other site and had them access the LUNs on the previous site. A few days later the team switched back to normal. Did site switching work without data losses? The answer: Yes, it did.

“The failover was 100% transparent and proved that we can run applications from both sites at the same speed and keep our users happy,” says Vakis. A successfully completed nondisruptive upgrade added to the great experience for IT and end users. There was even positive feedback from users about the faster data warehouse processes.

The move to clustered Data ONTAP and the latest hardware generation enabled not only greater efficiency but also cloud readiness. All open-system data and applications now share a single platform that can be enhanced easily into a hybrid cloud and managed flexibly with a few mouse clicks across disk, flash, and cloud. The necessary management capabilities are already built into clustered Data ONTAP.

Well positioned for a world with 24/7 business hours

Although cloud integration is still under internal review, the infrastructure team is set to run cloud pilots for test and development. If the bank’s information security department approves cloud usage, backup as a service could be an interesting option. In any case, the new platform’s scalability will enable the team to move more workloads and applications onto it in the future.

For now, Bank of Cyprus has substantially improved availability, flexibility, and performance, all of which are paramount to survival in a digitized world with 24/7 business hours. “Choosing NetApp again as our storage vendor was a strategic step,” says Vakis. “We will definitely continue to invest in NetApp solutions to support our journey to a digitized business model.”

SOLUTION COMPONENTS

NetApp Products

NetApp FAS8060 4-node cluster with SAS and SSD media

NetApp clustered Data ONTAP 8.3 OS

Flash Pool

MetroCluster software

OnCommand® software

SnapManager® for Exchange and SQL Server

Snapshot technology

Tiebreaker

Protocols

CIFS, NFS, iSCSI, FC

Third-Party Products

Citrix XenApp, Linux, Microsoft applications, Oracle Database and RAC, IBM TSM, VMware vSphere

Partner

COMIT Solutions Ltd.
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