PPS Invests in Tintri VMstore™ All-Flash Storage and Software to Deliver Innovation

VMstore

PPS is an authorized financial services provider that delivers a comprehensive array of tailor-made insurance, investment, and healthcare solutions to its members, who are graduate professionals. Unlike companies that are listed on a stock exchange, PPS operates under the ethos of 'mutuality', where all members with qualifying products share in the profits of the PPS Group. PPS currently serves over 100,000 clients from its headquarters in Johannesburg and satellite offices located across South Africa and Australia.

The Challenge: Aging Storage and Server Infrastructure Is Difficult to Manage and Scale

PPS's previous IT environment had consisted of IBM servers and EMC storage devices for its production SAN workloads and backup environment. After identifying that there were more innovative and efficient solutions on the market, the company decided to look at upgrading its systems. "Storage technologies have improved dramatically since we bought the IBM and EMC systems," noted Avsharn Bachoo, CTO at PPS. "We decided it was time to look for a more advanced infrastructure solution."

The Solution: Tintri VMstore

PPS's IT team enlisted the help of ICT systems integrator Datacentrix to look for more innovative solutions. Datacentrix provides software solutions and services across the full information value chain. The company's value-driven strategy and proven execution capability reinforce its position as one of the top ICT players in the South African market. "We've been reselling VMstore all-flash storage and software for nearly six years now," noted Venesia Oxford, account manager at Datacentrix. "The reason we recommended VMstore to PPS was due to the tremendous success we've had with their architecture at our other customer installations."

After hearing recommendations from Datacentrix, PPS issued an RFP for the new infrastructure and conducted a PoC on several of the most promising technologies. "VMstore was far superior to all of the other options in terms of cost for the value obtained," noted Oxford. "With VMstore, the entire management process is streamlined since its architecture is designed to work within a virtualized environment. Previously, we spent a lot of time and resources trying to manage the storage architecture. However, VMstore eliminates this disconnect."

After the successful VMstore PoC, PPS purchased several VMstore systems which were deployed at the company's main data center for production workloads and at a secondary site for disaster recovery. A few months after the initial purchase, PPS expanded the capacity by purchasing an additional all-flash system for production and another solution for DR, and is using Tintri VM Scale-out to balance workloads across the storage pools.

The Results: Faster Performance, Better Visibility, Smaller Footprint

PPS is now running its IBM Insurance Application Architecture (IAA) framework, numerous Microsoft applications including six very large MS SQL databases, and its Citrix VDI environment on the VMstore hybrid and all-flash systems.

"One of the biggest advantages of VMstore is its ease of use," noted Derik Scheepers, Head of IT Operations at PPS. "With the EMC storage systems, management was very complex and time-consuming. VMstore is far less complicated from an ongoing management perspective. In addition, VMstore's advanced snapshot and cloning make management even easier and the solution provides amazing speed and performance. None of this functionality existed on our EMC devices."

Challenge
- Aging storage and server infrastructure was difficult to manage and scale

Solution
- Tintri VMstore

Results
- Cut monthly report generation time from by several days
- Simplified ongoing storage management by eliminating the need to create LUNs
- Provided granular visibility into storage, VMs, and applications to optimize the environment and speed troubleshooting
- Reduced data center footprint from 80U to 6U

Tintri
Intelligent Infrastructure

"The VMstore management interface is very advanced," Scheepers said. "It provides granular visibility into the storage layer, applications, VMs, and servers. With VMstore, we can easily identify where any problems exist now or could occur in the future."

PPS has reported a significant improvement in database performance for all of its batch jobs and reports since moving to the VMstore all-flash system. "We noticed a huge increase in performance, especially with our large SQL databases," Bachoo reported. "On average, everything is running 85% faster on VMstore than the EMC storage systems. For example, our month-end processing reports used to take two to three days. They now finish in less than a day on VMstore, freeing up our IT team for more strategic activities."

The move to VMstore also reduced footprint and power at PPS's two data centers. "Our storage footprint went from 80U with the EMC systems to just 6U with VMstore," Scheepers reported.

With the help of IT Consulting Hub's virtualization experts, PPS implemented VMware Site Recovery Manager (SRM) to orchestrate failover from its production systems to DR. "PPS is the first customer in South Africa to have implemented VMware SRM with VMstore as part of its DR plan," explained Alex Zorab, senior trainer and VMware consultant at IT Consulting Hub. "Using the VMstore systems with VMware's SRM, PPS is now able to successfully meet its recovery time objectives (RTOs) in a DR situation."

"VMstore all-flash storage and software are the ideal solution for any organization that wants to enhance system performance or simplify management," concluded Bachoo. "With advanced analytics and granular visibility, the solution not only helps us to identify immediate problems, we can see what may occur in the future. After previously relying on a traditional EMC system, we are pleased to have made the upgrade to VMstore and have experienced features we could not get before."

> "VMstore is uniquely designed to work within virtual environments, streamlining management and enhancing performance. Compared to other competitors in the region, VMstore provides a much simpler and more cost-effective solution."
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> *Avsharn Bachoo, CTO, PPS*

Experience Different! For more information on how Tintri VMstore can turbo-charge your business success through a simple, Intelligent Infrastructure, visit tintri.com/vmstore.

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