NetApp®

Basefarm offers customers nondisruptive operations and underpins its own growth

basefarm

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KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Industry
IT service provision

The Challenge
Replace the existing ageing storage system that had almost reached its capacity with a flexible, efficient, and cost-effective platform that was easy to scale to help the business meet and exceed its growth targets.

The Solution
Implement NetApp® clustered Data ONTAP® storage platform.

Benefits
- Flexible platform for easy scaling
- Always-on service
- Unmatched price/performance
- Quality of service to drive the business

Customer Profile

Basefarm is a leading service provider for mission-critical business applications. It provides a range of technology solutions, high-end cloud services, application management, and co-location infrastructure services from six data centres across Europe. Its customers represent a wide range of industries, such as finance and banking, travel, digital media, and the public sector. Basefarm's solutions extend into 23 countries, and it provides services for approximately 35,000 sites and 40 million end users.

The company was formed in 2000, focusing on supporting clients' mission-critical business applications with unparalleled availability, operation, and maintenance. Since then, it has experienced growth of between 15% and 20% each year as more and more services move online. This growth will not only be sustained, but it is also expected to increase as online opportunities continue to radically transform business and operational models across a swathe of industries.

The Challenge

Clearly, there's no room for error in the services provided by Basefarm given that customers depend on it to keep their businesses running.

For example, many clients within the travel industry use Basefarm to run their online booking and check-in systems, and those in the financial sector turn to it to keep payment-processing systems and other equally tier 1 applications up and running.

Today, Basefarm's services extend into robust, cloud-based infrastructure characterised by high-availability and security services offerings that tackle cyber attacks and guarantee business continuity. However, high service availability has remained a critical and constant feature, and to keep ahead of its growth curve, the company needed to upgrade its storage platform.

Growing customer needs

Given the nature of its business, Basefarm is constantly aiming for an IT infrastructure that is not only robust, reliable, and industry-leading, but is also one that can easily accommodate the growing needs of existing customers and the demands of new customers. The nature of these needs varies according to the customer; the digital media industry, for example, has high storage requirements that continue to grow given the image-intensive nature of its business.

> "To maintain and build on our position, we must stay ahead of the curve. NetApp provides a cost-effective platform to increase storage capacity as new customers come on board and the needs of existing customers increase."

Sara Murby Forste
Senior Vice President of Marketing, Basefarm

Robust and scalable platform required

Anders Högberg, senior architect at Basefarm, explains, "We have used NetApp technology for a long time; it is flexible, reliable, and cost-effective. In Sweden, we had two NetApp FAS3170C systems but one of them had reached its capacity, and in the fast-moving world of technology, these systems were also relatively old.

"We needed a new storage platform to support our existing customers and one that was not only flexible in terms of scaling, but also in capacity and performance. We were also looking for a lower TCO. In short, we were looking for a more agile platform."

The Solution

Högberg adds, "In the past, NetApp technology had given us unified storage, integrated data protection, and great efficiency. Clearly, we wanted to ensure we still had these benefits but with added flexibility and scaling." Basefarm assessed the available storage technologies in the market and eventually decided on NetApp clustered Data ONTAP.

Unified storage

NetApp clustered Data ONTAP delivers a unified storage platform that enables unrestricted access and secure data movement across multiple cloud environments. By offering advanced performance, availability, and efficiency, its clustering capabilities can also keep Basefarm's business running around the clock.

Also important is the fact that flexible scalability is a leading feature of NetApp clustered Data ONTAP, allowing Basefarm to scale as required. For example, it can scale from terabytes to tens of petabytes without reconfiguring applications.
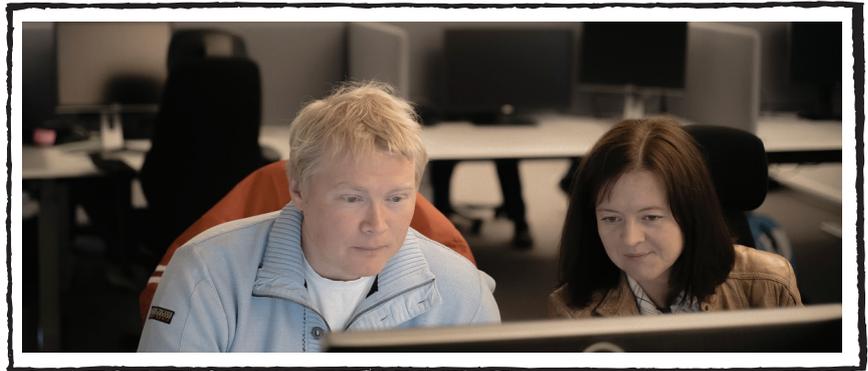
Reduction in storage costs

NetApp clustered Data ONTAP also enables the reduction of storage costs per terabyte with the use of SATA technology, and it also helps lower acquisition costs by using 'just-in-time' storage with built-in thin provisioning.

It's also possible to consolidate and share the same infrastructure for different performance and security requirements. This native multi-tenancy helps Basefarm maximise its investment.

Eliminating downtime

From the performance and maintenance perspectives, NetApp clustered Data ONTAP enables nondisruptive operations. For example, storage maintenance, hardware lifecycle operations, and software upgrades can be carried out without interrupting the business, and planned and unplanned downtime can simply be eliminated.

In fact, the benefits offered by NetApp clustered Data ONTAP were sufficiently compelling that the company implemented a premium bundle of FAS6250HA clustered Data ONTAP with NetApp Flash Cache™ intelligent caching and SAS disk, and a backup of FAS2240HA clustered Data ONTAP with SATA disk

Business Benefits
Scaling the business

It's clearly critical for Basefarm to be able to meet its customer needs, which from the storage perspective are steadily and gradually increasing. NetApp clustered Data ONTAP enables the company to do this with ease.

Sara Murby Forste, senior vice president of marketing at Basefarm, says, "We are a market leader in the mission-critical business app space with a wide range of customers.

Storage requirements are growing all the time, and to maintain and build on our position, we must stay ahead of the curve. NetApp clustered storage allows us to do this by providing an easy and cost-effective platform to increase storage capacity as new customers come on board and the needs of existing customers increase."

Always-on service

The impact of downtime on mission-critical applications typically has an adverse effect on productivity and undermines Basefarm's business model. Clustered Data ONTAP improves service levels over the lifecycle of an application because storage resources can be dynamically assigned as the need arises. In general, migrating customers on and off storage for replacements or upgrades is historically a point of friction as well as being costly.

Clustered Data ONTAP obviates this need by providing greater operational agility, fewer data migrations, and reduced overhead. Högberg says, "It lowers our administration requirements and in most cases removes the need for planned downtime. It also allows us to operate as a 24/7 always-on service platform. In turn, this means our service delivery meets existing and future needs of customers, as well as giving us the ability to develop further our standard services."

Unmatched price/performance

A sweeping and efficient IT infrastructure is essential to Basefarm's operations. With over 35,000 sites to support and 40 million end users, the company needs robust efficiency. However, cost-effectiveness is also extremely important so that the company's revenues are not eaten into by IT costs.

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Anders Högberg
Senior Architect, Basefarm

The powerful functionality of clustered Data ONTAP provides a reliable, efficient, and scalable data infrastructure that delivers operational and cost efficiencies that were not previously available. Högberg adds, "In one sense, it's not the cheapest option, but in terms of the performance/price ratio, it's certainly the most cost-effective. And when other benefits are factored in, in our opinion, it's certainly the best platform to meet our needs."

Quality of service drives the business

For both Högberg and Murby Forste one of the further compelling benefits delivered by clustered Data ONTAP is the quality of service it provides. At a technical level, the platform uses storage virtual machines to decouple data access from physical storage devices. This means a storage cluster can be subdivided into distinct storage virtual machines that are governed by their own rights and permissions.

Högberg explains, "In a service provider environment, this is an important point and in practical terms means we can deliver robust quality of service, which is a very important point for both our business and our customers."

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