OVERVIEW
Esprinet is a leading wholesale distributor of IT and consumer electronics in Italy and Spain. The company sells 600 brands through approximately 40,000 resellers and its website. With 1,000 employees, Esprinet is the number one distributor in Italy and within the top three in Spain. Every month more than 16,000 customers purchase products and services from Esprinet, many leveraging its web-centric business model designed to support small-to-midsize businesses.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES
Esprinet has been on a steady growth path for years, which resulted in a diverse environment spanning HP, IBM, and EMC storage to support different aspects of the business. This complex infrastructure was time-consuming and costly to manage. In addition, the HP system was lagging in performance and all of its storage systems required more capacity.

After evaluating new offerings from IBM and EMC, Esprinet decided to consolidate most of its IBM storage, as well as its HP and EMC storage onto EMC® VNX® unified storage.

Cesare Pedrazzini, Esprinet’s chief technology officer, notes, “We chose VNX because it offered the ideal balance of performance, scalability, and price. To get comparable technology from IBM would have been much more expensive.”

SOLUTIONS
Esprinet deployed VNX with a FLASH 1st strategy—the EMC FAST™ Suite, including FAST Cache and FAST VP, along with Flash and high-capacity disk drives—to optimize performance and utilization. EMC Unisphere®, included with VNX, centrally manages the VNX storage infrastructure.

VNX runs Esprinet’s Oracle database and business intelligence applications, as well as Microsoft SQL Server to process web-based customer orders. Approximately 70 percent of the company’s infrastructure is virtualized with VMware® vSphere™.

For business continuity, Esprinet uses the EMC Remote Protection Suite to replicate VNX data to a second VNX in a remote data center 200 meters away. VNX is backed up to an EMC Data Domain® deduplication storage system as another level of data protection. Data Domain is replicated to the remote data center. Esprinet is also evaluating EMC VPLEX® for future deployment to enable disaster recovery and seamless data mobility.

With the help of EMC Professional Services, Esprinet successfully migrated data and applications from its previous storage systems to the VNX with no data loss.
Results

- Increased I/O throughput by 65 percent
- Handled 80 percent of I/O with one percent Flash capacity
- Reduced time to generate data warehousing reports from 3.5 to 2.5 hours
- Consolidated from four racks to one, with 33 percent fewer drives
- Achieved 39 percent improvement in energy efficiency

“We’ve been impressed with the knowledge and support that EMC has given us,” Pedrazzini remarks. “With other vendors we’ve often felt very alone, but EMC has always made us feel well supported.”

“EMC worked closely with us and made several valuable suggestions to improve our solution design. We really got much more than storage from EMC,” he adds.

FLASH 1st STRATEGY OPTIMIZES PERFORMANCE AND EFFICIENCY

By leveraging VNX and FLASH 1st, Esprinet has improved data center performance and efficiency at many levels.

With FAST Cache, the company is meeting 80 percent of its I/O demand from Flash drives, which represent just one percent of the VNX disk capacity. The remaining 99 percent of Esprinet's VNX storage comprises lower-cost, higher-capacity SAS drives. In addition, I/O throughput has increased 65 percent with Flash drives and FAST Cache, accelerating important business processes.

“Reports from our data warehouse must be ready for Esprinet's executive director first thing every morning,” says Pedrazzini. “Before, these reports took three and a half hours. But now with VNX, they complete in just two and a half hours. Our data warehouse team is very happy because they’ve gained an hour back each day for adding value and solving problems instead of generating reports.”

“We can count on EMC’s expertise and partnership to continue transforming IT into an enabler of business growth and profitability.”

Cesare Pedrazzini
Chief Technology Officer at Esprinet

SMALLER FOOTPRINT, GREATER CAPACITY

The efficiency gained from VNX and FLASH 1st has enabled Esprinet to shrink the physical footprint in its data center, while gaining cost-effective scalability to support the company’s continued growth. In fact, strategic use of Flash and high-capacity drives enabled Esprinet to reduce the number of racks from four to one, resulting in 33 percent fewer drives and a 39 percent improvement in energy efficiency.

“We have a much more consolidated, cost-efficient storage environment that provides plenty of capacity to support the business for several years,” states Pedrazzini. “And when we do need more space, VNX scales very cost effectively. It will allow us to keep pace as business requirements grow and change.”

AUTOMATED ADMINISTRATION WITH FAST VP

VNX has simplified Esprinet's storage environment, saving time in provisioning and administration.

“With FAST VP, many administrative tasks are automatic,” explains Pedrazzini. “This has freed up enough time for us to redirect IT staff to more important projects.”
Another significant benefit is the integration between Esprinet's VNX storage and VMware infrastructure. VMware vStorage APIs for Storage Awareness (VASA) and vStorage APIs for Array Integration (VAAI) have proven to be especially valuable to Esprinet.

"The tight integration between our VMware infrastructure and VNX storage combined with the Unisphere and VMware tools give us a lot of visibility into our virtual machines," Pedrazzini says. "This allows our administrators to easily monitor how much space each virtual machine is using to ensure we meet the needs of the business."

Pedrazzini adds, "We have a small IT staff, so operating as efficiently as possible is essential. VNX has already shown many ways to achieve greater efficiency. We can count on EMC’s expertise and partnership to continue transforming IT into an enabler of business growth and profitability."

CONTACT US

To learn more about how EMC products, services, and solutions can help solve your business and IT challenges, contact your local representative or authorized reseller—or visit us at www.EMC.com.