Nominee: FlashArray 400 Series, and 3.0 Purity Operating Environment software by Pure Storage

Nomination title: Making the all-flash enterprise a reality

In May 2013, Pure Storage, the all-flash enterprise storage company, introduced its third generation all-flash enterprise storage array, the FlashArray 400 Series, and 3.0 Purity Operating Environment software.

IDC has forecasted the all-flash storage array market to reach $1.2 billion in revenue by 2015, with a forecasted 58.5% CAGR over the forecast period. As the business world wakes up to the performance, efficiency and cost saving benefits of running their enterprise applications and data centres on flash memory over spinning disk drives, the Pure Storage FlashArray is making the vision of an all-flash enterprise a possibility.

Global customer demand for FlashArray spurred exponential growth for the company in 2013, with revenues increasing by more than 700% -- and at least 50% sequential quarter on quarter growth. The company deployed 10+ Pure FlashArrays at multiple customer sites, creating ">1PB club" (in terms of usable flash deployed); it also grew its customer base YoY by 650% yet a staggering 45% of new bookings came from repeat customers. To keep pace with demand, Pure Storage also established new offices across three continents, including Germany, UK, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan and Australia.

With its FA 400-series release, Pure Storage effectively doubled FlashArray's useable storage capacity and performance, and introduced a powerful new version of its award-winning Purity Operating Environment software, as well as an exceptional breakthrough in customer support:

• Simplicity is key: Traditionally, deploying HDD-based storage arrays in the data centre could take days, even weeks. By contrast, the Pure Storage FlashArray is simple to implement, offering rapid time to deployment – under 15 minutes in most cases – so new customers can begin realising its benefits in minutes.

• A powerful engine room: Leveraging Intel's latest 8-core "Sandy Bridge" processor to deliver up to 400,000 8K IOPs, the FA-400 offers best-in-class speed and performance. Unlike its competitors who tout million+ IOP vanity benchmarks, the FlashArray has been optimised to perform well across all IO sizes to meet the performance needs of a variety of enterprise applications and workloads.

It uniquely employs high-performance inline data reduction techniques to dramatically reduce the data footprint. This makes the size of the FlashArray 5-10X larger than its actual physical size, thereby driving down the £/GB usable. It also has a unique Dedupe Ticker, a live feed of customer data from CloudAssist that shows the average data reduction results across all Pure Storage FlashArrays.

• The brains behind the operation: FlashArray is powered by an award-winning software system: the Purity Operating Environment, which offers uncompromising new levels of resiliency, security, performance and integration. Downtime for maintenance isn't an option when a business is running hundreds of applications, so it uniquely offers completely non-disruptive maintenance, software updates, capacity and performance expansion with zero downtime and zero performance loss. And with security being a growing concern for businesses, FlashArray harnesses an always-on data-at-rest 256-bit AES encryption, helping protect customers against loss or theft of data during operations, transit or drive maintenance.

• Ensuring you sleep well at night: Businesses need to know there's a support team always on standby. FlashArray customers receive 24/7/365 support, with direct access to a Pure Storage technical support engineer with an average of 9.5 years' experience. This is worlds better than its competitors who run basic support services where only 5-10% of issues are resolved. But that's not all, through FlashArray's cloud based diagnostics, called CloudAssist, they call home every 30 seconds to check their status and offer problem alerts, identification and analysis in the cloud as well as having support personnel monitor the Array's health in real-time. This has created a very happy customer base, in fact, in 2013 Pure Storage set an industry record for customer satisfaction, in excess of 95%.

Sending its competitors running for the hills.

In November 2013, industry big hitter EMC announced its own enterprise flash solution, however, not every all-flash storage array is created equal. Setting FlashArray apart from the pack is its unrivalled maturity and resiliency—proven over hundreds of customer deployments—and feature-rich architecture, which offers deep integration with leading third-party application environments, was built from the ground-up to deliver the most optimized enterprise storage experience on the planet.

And the customers?

A real success story for FlashArray is Microgaming, the online gaming site that's been at the forefront of its industry since 1994. After migrating its front-end gaming logic application from a physical to a virtual environment, it became apparent that the company's existing storage infrastructure, which included a number of different traditional disk, hybrid and solid-state SAN solutions, was unable to meet the levels of performance needed by the virtual platform. Microgaming needs to provide its service 24/7, so it couldn't afford to risk

any downtime. In the end, no other product could promise 99.999 percent availability, a statistic that's consistent across Pure Storage's entire customer base.

It chose the Pure Storage FlashArray to underpin its entire virtual infrastructure, increasing performance, efficiency and resiliency for its gaming infrastructure, and delivering a best-in-class online gaming experience. Microgaming achieved greater than 5:1 data reduction and more than halved its virtual hosting storage costs. As a result, the FlashArray will pay for itself in less than 20 months.

FlashArray was benchmarked against its competitors and carefully evaluated through vigorous testing before being chosen, Leon Turner, Head of IT at Microgaming explains: "Pure Storage's FlashArray was a clear winner, offering greater performance, whilst at the same time demonstrating high levels of redundancy and ease of management. It beat the competition when it came to reducing the total cost of ownership, using sophisticated inline-deduplication and compression technologies, which, along with the thin provisioning capabilities, helped us realise between 5:1 and 25:1 savings, depending on the data type. In addition, we were impressed right from the start with the technical knowledge of the Pure Storage team and their professional, approachable manner."

With the release of the FA-400 in 2013, Pure Storage took the next step in realising its vision to democratize all-flash storage and deliver 'Flash for All:' Flash for all applications – flash for all industries – flash for all customer sizes – flash for all budgets. The market Pure Storage competes in has become hotly contested, with EMC, Violin and FusionIO jostling for market share. In 2013 Pure Storage continued to advance its market leadership through precision execution of its vision to deliver 'Flash for All' with ground breaking product and support innovation for an unrivalled customer experience.

Why nominee should win

- In its third year of production deployments, with hundreds of units shipped, the Pure Storage FlashArray is the industry's most mature, stable and production-hardened all-flash enterprise storage array.
- FlashArray has been so popular that Pure Storage grew revenue by over 700% in 2013, with existing customers bringing in 45% of those bookings.
- Pure Storage is consistently signing new customers, including Betfair, Picard, and Cineworld (and others) as of late.