Solid state array boosts performance and flexibility for CGI Portugal’s hosted services

Consumption-based HPE 3PAR storage cuts costs, enhances competitiveness

By leveraging HPE 3PAR solid state arrays with HPE GreenLake Flex Capacity, CGI Portugal created a resource-efficient consumption-based storage as a service solution that aligns performance and capacity with the individual requirements of its large, demanding customers, providing dramatic cost savings for CGI Portugal and a huge performance boost for its customers.

Historically, CGI Portugal relied on a traditional storage infrastructure, which meant having multiple storage clusters each with predefined levels of capacity and service-level agreements. The problem was the unit cost for this legacy storage was ten times greater than what...
“With HPE 3PAR and HPE GreenLake Flex Capacity, we now have a model that can accommodate requests for more performance or more capacity independently without wasting resources. Whether a client asks for one terabyte of storage with 1,000 IOPS or one terabyte with 10,000 IOPS, we have a pricing model for them. This is the flexibility we were looking for.”

– Jorge Ribeiro, Director of Consulting Delivery, Global Technology Operations, CGI Southern Europe & Brazil

Consumption-based HPE 3PAR:
• Reduces storage costs by 70% while increasing storage flexibility
• Addresses diverse client needs
• Streamlines data protection

the company’s customers were willing to pay. And it lacked the agility to align with individual customer requirements. For example, one customer might need 10 TB of storage capacity for an application requiring 100,000 IOPS, while another could be the complete opposite—100 TB of capacity with 10,000 IOPS. Consequently, the storage clusters were inevitably either over or under provisioned. To remain competitive, CGI Portugal had to find a more flexible and cost-effective way to deliver storage services.

Jorge Ribeiro, director of consulting delivery with the GTO division of CGI Portugal, explains, “Our business objective is to map our services to market demands. We have clients that no longer want the expense of running their own infrastructure, yet require greater data control than they could get from a public cloud provider. We needed a solution that could provide our clients local infrastructure with the business model of the cloud.”

Ribeiro presented this requirement to several storage vendors, and after a thorough evaluation, determined that HPE 3PAR StoreServ Storage delivered via HPE GreenLake Flex Capacity provided the ideal solution. “HPE 3PAR brought us the flexibility we needed to create isolated domains for our customers, and the ability to use quality of service policies to give each workload the precise capacity and performance it needs. HPE GreenLake Flex Capacity brought a consumption-based model to align our price for service with client expectations.”

Flexible HPE 3PAR storage aligns with diverse client needs

CGI Portugal deployed HPE 3PAR StoreServ 20800 Storage in its production data center with a mix of high-performance flash and high-capacity SAS drives, and configured with HPE 3PAR Virtual Domains Software. The company also deployed HPE 3PAR StoreServ 8400 Storage at a remote site for disaster recovery (DR), using HPE 3PAR Remote Copy to replicate data from production to DR.

CGI Portugal serves just a handful of very large customers with its private cloud. They run highly sensitive workloads and are not willing to share storage in the traditional sense. However, HPE 3PAR enables CGI Portugal to ensure absolute separation between virtual domains on a common physical storage platform, meeting customer demands while affording the company greater efficiency and flexibility in its storage as a service offering.
HPE GreenLake Flex Capacity enhances the flexibility of HPE 3PAR by providing CGI Portugal a consumption-based, pay-as-you-go financial model. By providing a dynamic storage environment with a choice in the class of service delivered, HPE GreenLake Flex Capacity allows CGI Portugal to match the precise levels of storage capacity and performance to each customer workload. Customers pay only for the storage per terabyte consumed, and CGI Portugal is able to maximize utilization efficiency within its storage infrastructure.

Ribeiro remarks, “With our previous storage solution, if we needed more performance, we needed to allocate more capacity, which was basically a waste of space. With HPE 3PAR and HPE GreenLake Flex Capacity, we now have a model that can accommodate requests for more performance or more capacity independently without wasting resources. Whether a client asks for 10 terabytes of storage with 1,000 IOPS or one terabyte with 10,000 IOPS, we have a pricing model for them. This is the flexibility we were looking for.”

Backup appliance streamlines data protection

In addition to storage as a service, CGI Portugal has expanded its offerings with backup as a service built on HPE StoreOnce data protection appliances. Ribeiro notes that having HPE 3PAR storage made it easy to use HPE Recovery Manager Central (RMC) to integrate with StoreOnce and facilitate backups without the need for separate backup software. This provided an opportunity to offer a more competitive backup service to the company’s customers than was possible with its legacy solution.

“With RMC, we were able to drastically reduce our use of separate backup software,” says Ribeiro. “This came as a bonus because we were actually able to cancel a previous contract we had with another supplier, saving us tens of thousands of euros per year. We saw how RMC worked in a demonstration and recognized that it would serve our backup needs for most situations. It was really a no brainer to adopt this solution.”

He further points out that HPE StoreOnce was a logical choice due to the ease of doing business with HPE inside the HPE GreenLake Flex Capacity agreement. “Even given CGI's lengthy purchasing process, HPE GreenLake Flex Capacity allowed us to acquire HPE StoreOnce relatively quickly and painlessly.”

In addition, the company takes advantage of HPE StoreOnce Catalyst software to deduplicate backup data and shrink backup windows.
“Compared to our old way of handling storage, HPE 3PAR and HPE GreenLake Flex Capacity provide a whole new level of flexibility and cost-efficiency, enabling CGI Portugal to align our services with the individual needs of our clients. This is essential because everything we do is driven by client requirements.”

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Proactive capacity planning keeps budgets on track

To help keep the consumption-based storage and backup infrastructure running at peak efficiency, and as a resource for longer-term infrastructure planning, CGI Portugal relies on HPE Datacenter Care from HPE Pointnext. In addition to gaining proactive operational services such as technical support or software and firmware updates, CGI Portugal also benefits from regular meetings with an assigned account support manager.

“HPE Datacenter Care works very well for us,” says Ribeiro. “On multiple occasions we have had communications come from the HPE Pointnext team alerting us about a needed upgrade or potential problem in the infrastructure. That gives me peace of mind knowing HPE Pointnext is catching any issues before they cause problems for our business. I also have a very good relationship with our support manager who provides me with periodic reports and works with me to plan upgrades and enhancements to the infrastructure. He makes sure everything gets handled with no issues.”

For consumption reporting, capacity planning, and budget forecasting, Ribeiro is also using the HPE Consumption Analytics Portal, part of HPE GreenLake Flex Capacity. “Using data provided by our support manager, I have been able to create reports on consumption rates that help me budget for future capacity needs. Budgeting for me is paramount, which makes the ease of use and responsiveness of the portal vital to my everyday responsibilities.”

He concludes, “Compared to our old way of handling storage, HPE 3PAR and HPE GreenLake Flex Capacity provide a whole new level of flexibility and cost-efficiency, enabling CGI Portugal to align our services with the individual needs of our clients. This is essential because everything we do is driven by client requirements.”

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