



## Storage Virtualization at External IT

### Customer Snapshot

External IT, a hosted IT-as-a-service company serving the needs of the small and medium enterprise virtual workforce, has standardized on DataCore's SANsymphony™ storage virtualization software to serve as their storage area network (SAN) of choice for its business and thereby for its clients and its reseller partners too. With VMware virtual servers, Citrix XenApp and DataCore storage virtualization, External IT is able to deliver a complete virtualization infrastructure in the form of private computing "clouds," tailored individually to a specific client's needs.

### The Challenge

External IT bases its business around VMware and Citrix as a hosting platform for the services and solutions it provides. Moreover, External IT embraces a cloud computing model to deliver its services – meaning that External IT clients are completely independent of their own offices. External IT underwent an exhaustive search of SAN vendors, including Compellent, EMC, NetApp, IBM, EqualLogic as well as DataCore. The directive was to pick the best SAN for External IT to deploy – one that would be the most reliable, flexible, powerful and cost-effective.

Key to achieving this directive was meeting The Mirazon Group, an IT solutions provider and strategic partner of DataCore. The partner was able to demonstrate just how DataCore met all the key characteristics External IT was looking for in a SAN – reliability, flexibility, cost-effectiveness – as well as introduce the firm to even more benefits inherent to DataCore's software-based storage virtualization solutions – value that constitutes the "DataCore Difference."

"I was first exposed to DataCore at a Brian Madden conference," said Joseph Stedler, senior engineer and Dallas data center manager, External IT. "In fact the first thing I saw was one of DataCore's 'Pimp My Storage' tee-shirts. The gimmick intrigued me and when I found out from a DataCore representative just how DataCore could 'pimp my storage' my reaction was that if DataCore is what I think it is, then this is a fundamental shift – for the better – in terms of SAN technology. The deficiencies that are inherent to traditional SANs are overcome by the DataCore virtual SAN, software-based approach."

*"There are capabilities that DataCore brings to the table that I absolutely love," commented Stedler. "The concept of having two SANs as your one SAN environment is just elegantly simple. You have an 'A' side and a 'B' side."*

*Joseph Stedler, senior engineer and Dallasdata center manager, External IT*

## The Solution

When the dust settled from an exhaustive vetting process, External IT selected DataCore's SANsymphony as its de facto SAN, responsible for serving as a universal storage controller and enabling the company to get the most out of its storage with its software-based storage virtualization approach. Now, all of the applications that an External IT client may need are hosted out of External IT's data center via Citrix and the infrastructure all relies on DataCore, which is the backbone of it all.

Stedler summarizes the value of a storage virtualization approach as follows, "I have worked with traditional SANs for eight years and have had firsthand experience with every major hardware SAN under the sun - EMC, HP, NetApp, etc." he said. "There are various, major drawbacks to hardware SANs. One is the fact that there is a single point of failure at the disk level. This is particularly the case when doing, for example, firmware upgrades - on the controllers, on the disks, on the shelves - whereby you have to take the SAN down to perform that task. The second most irksome characteristic of hardware SANs is their cost. These EMC SANs, these HP EVAs are inherently expensive, particularly during upgrade time."

"There are capabilities that DataCore brings to the table that I absolutely love," commented Stedler. "The concept of having two SANs as your one SAN environment is just elegantly simple. You have an 'A' side and a 'B' side." The beauty of this is that if you need to do hardware maintenance or firmware upgrades, an administrator can actually take down half of the SAN and still have the other half serving production traffic - completely uninterrupted.

The second, major benefit of DataCore for External IT has to do with performance. "With DataCore, you will experience enormous performance gains," noted Stedler. "The performance that DataCore delivers is nothing short of awesome."

Other benefits that make up the "DataCore Difference" for External IT include Seamless Maintenance, Disaster Recovery (through asynchronous replication) and the Flexibility to create your own SANs.

**For more information on storage virtualization, please visit:**  
[www.datacore.com](http://www.datacore.com)

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