AXIANS | FUTURE-PROOF

Axians in Sweden acquired a modern storage platform to build for a hybrid cloud future.

Axians Sweden chooses NetApp to future-proof operations

Axians Sweden was looking to modernize its data platform with added performance, data efficiency, and features. The company chose NetApp to implement a future-proof system.

HIGH DATA EFFICIENCY

FEATURE-RICH PLATFORM

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THE CUSTOMER PROFILE

A Managed Services Provider (MSP), Axians is a global brand with a key focus on improving, developing, and operating IT & Communications solutions for customers. The service provider has a strong penetration in hybrid cloud, providing hybrid cloud services from the company's own datacenters with the option to extend to hyper-scalars. The customer portfolio is diverse with many very different verticals, including mid-size bank & finance as well as media, and education. Through its focus on corporate social responsibility, Axians has attained certification in sustainable ICT operations. In Sweden, Axians employs 450 employees across two datacenters, seven offices, and six locations. On a global level, the service provider has a strong partnership with NetApp and other providers.

THE CHALLENGE

As part of a lifecycle refresh on the existing storage environment, Axians was looking to build for the future using a modern and stable platform. There was a need for more performance, better cloud integration, high operational stability (i.e. non-disruptive operations), and high storage efficiency, including data reduction. In addition, the new environment had to offer management and reporting tools, with integrated automation, and also be supported with Axians networking and server infrastructure from Cisco.

THE SOLUTION

To fulfill its needs, Axians turned to NetApp to implement an all-flash NetApp FAS8080 system in a Fabric MetroCluster configuration – creating an all-flash FlexPod. The all-flash system was expanded with HDD-based NetApp FAS2620 systems, allowing for NetApp-based data replication and backup in addition to Axians's existing backup solution.

Erik Sohlman, CTO at Axians, adds: "What I really like about NetApp is the modular, scalable, and flexible functionality that is easy to tailor for us and our customers' needs."

THE BUSINESS BENEFITS

With the all-flash storage in-place, Axians no longer needs to apply dedicated tiered storage – all data is now stored in one and the same flash-based pool, which is easy to structure. Erik Sohlman, CTO at Axians, explains: "It has become a lot easier for us to provide different service tiers using the NetApp QoS capabilities. The single Flash Pool approach eliminates time and resource-consuming internal data movement that was previously causing issues. We store all data on the same storage but with different QoS levels instead of different disk types."

ONTAP 9 management software comes with integrated data reduction technologies, including deduplication, compression and compaction, which is one of the reasons for choosing NetApp. In terms of efficiency Axians has achieved a very high level of storage efficiency – especially on the volumes hosting virtual servers.

Not only is the system highly efficient, it is also very stable and reliable. According to Erik, "Non-disruptive operations (NDO) performance has been excellent – we've had 100% uptime."

Thanks to the technological benefits of ONTAP and flash Axians was able to replace two complete racks of storage from their previous vendor down to a quarter of a rack instead. The

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Rich functionality
- Highly efficient
- Single storage basis with different QoS levels
- Automated workflows
- Cloud integration

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power and cooling costs have been drastically decreased.

In addition, Axians implemented NetApp OnCommand Workflow Automation, which is used for standardized operational tasks. This really helps guarantee standardization as it enables Axians to automate repeatable deployments. Erik confirms: "Workflow Automation has been very good and is easy to work with. We've been very happy ever since we deployed it."

The company is actively using NetApp OnCommand Insight to further optimize data insight and reporting, helping customers with proactive recommendation such as which storage tier to use, and to create customized and customer reports.

THE FUTURE VISION

Erik mentions: "It was important for us to have a modern, scalable platform. NetApp has a great focus regarding the Data Fabric, whereby data can move freely."

With new Fabric Pool technology from NetApp, Axians is also planning to implement tiering to low-cost storage of long-term cold data and snapshots, thus reducing the flash-based data storage.

As a partner to some of the large hyper-scale cloud providers, the NetApp Data Fabric aligns well with Axians's hybrid cloud vision. This allows customers to store data in the Axians private cloud while extending out to public cloud providers.

SOLUTION COMPONENTS

NETAPP PRODUCTS

NetApp AFF8080 EX all-flash MetroCluster

NetApp FAS2620 HDD storage

NetApp ONTAP 9

Workflow Automation

OnCommand Insight & Unified Manager

FlexPod DataCenter solution

ENVIRONMENT

Commvault

Cisco ACI, UCS, S&R

F5 Big IP

Fortinet

VMware – Microsoft Hyper-V

Microsoft Azure & AWS

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