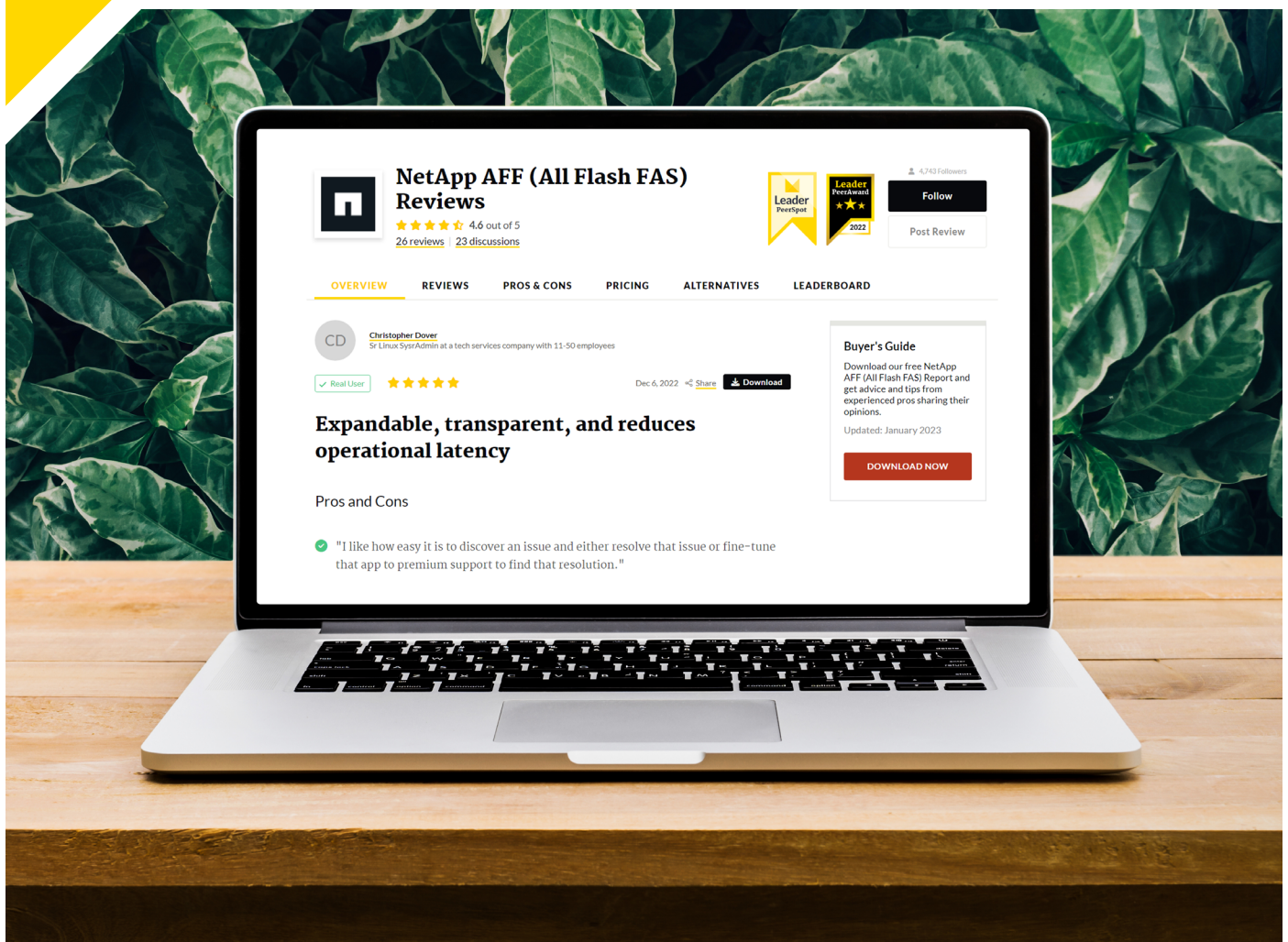


PeerPaper™ Report 2023

Based on Real User Experiences with NetApp AFF

Seven Reasons Why NetApp AFF Will Do More for Your Data and Prepare You for the Future



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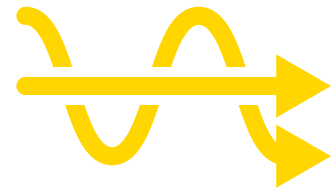
Introduction

Today's storage managers can choose from a range of solutions as they confront storage management and data protection challenges in continuously evolving on-premises and cloud environments. Seven factors explain why PeerSpot members chose NetApp® AFF and NetApp Cloud Volumes ONTAP® over competing solutions from Pure Storage, Dell and others: Simplicity, efficiency, and flexibility; workload consolidation; security; cost savings; cloud support; performance; and customer experience.

#1 Simplicity, Efficiency, and Flexibility

PeerSpot members reflected on why storage management, efficiency, and flexibility led them to choose NetApp over competitors:

- “We evaluated Dell EMC and HPE storage. The NetApp interface was very easy, as was managing things. Our experience with HPE, which we used before, was that it was quite a complex system to manage when it comes to the storage and volumes.” – System Administrator who uses NetApp AFF at a leisure/travel company with over 1,000 employees
- “I have been using NetApp solutions for the last 15 years. I have also used EMC, which is also good, but flexibility-wise, NetApp is better.” – System Administrator who uses NetApp AFF at a government with more than 200 employees
- “Normally, I work on IBM storage. Compared to those, this solution’s efficiency is good. The IBM solution is an all-SAN-based solution.” – AIX and Storage Specialist who uses NetApp AFF at a software company with over 1,000 employees
- “We evaluated IBM and Dell EMC, and Dell EMC was too expensive, and it didn’t have the flexibility that NetApp had.” – Manager who uses NetApp AFF at a healthcare company with over 10,000 employees



Simplification



Harish M.

Senior Consultant at a tech services
company with 10,001+ employees



“The scalability is seamless. Without any downtime, we can upgrade and scale-up.”

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These preferences resonated with other NetApp users. For example, a Senior Consultant who uses NetApp AFF at a tech services company with over 10,000 employees said, “The scalability is seamless. Without any downtime, we can upgrade and scale-up.” They now run a 40TB SSD front-end fabric pool, along with a 2PB NetApp StorageGRID® system on the back end.

A Storage Administrator who uses NetApp AFF at Sensa, a small software company, similarly shared, “The scalability is great and super easy. We are able to just connect, go through the UI, and select to expand the cluster. It is super easy even if you want to scale it out by having a mirror setup, not a cluster, or pairing them together. By being able to do this with just a couple of clicks of a mouse button, it is superb.”

The simplification of data management across SAN environments is what stood out to a System Engineer who uses NetApp AFF at Eni Petroleum Co., an energy/utilities company with over 10,000 employees. He said, “It allows us to concentrate all the data reliably in one platform. It also gives us a single pane of glass so that we can manage all the data properly. We can visualize and get a holistic view of what we have and how secure the data is. We have the bigger picture. It gives us a lot of flexibility when it comes to better management and using it has been an awesome experience.”

For this user, the “single pane of glass” lets his team analyze the system itself, providing a realistic view of what’s going on with issues, warnings, and errors. He added, “As a result, we can easily prevent a lot of problems, and that is something that we couldn’t do previously. It also facilitates the troubleshooting process due to the high volume of information that it gives us. It definitely helps reduce support issues.”

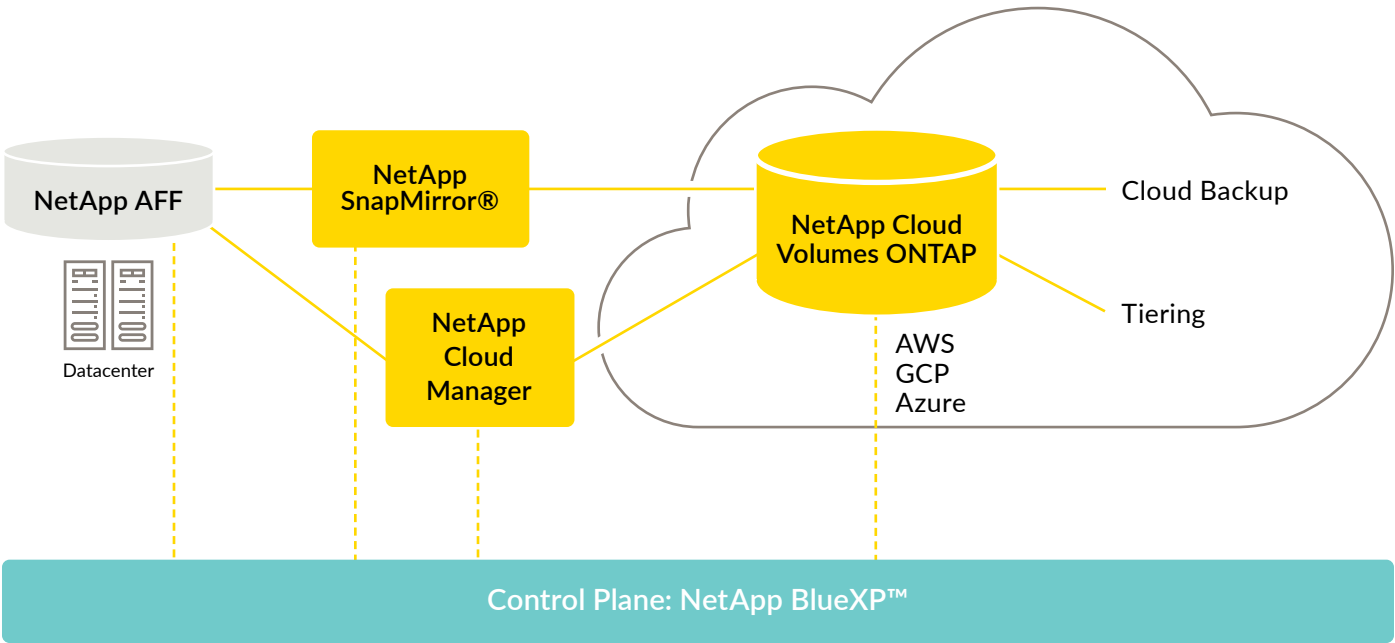


Figure 1 – NetApp cloud reference architecture



Swann A.
Director of the Projects
Department at ALPIX



“Our clients see return on their investment in AFF, due to the stability and efficiency. The efficiency is very important because we can buy fewer disks for more data.”

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“It has also simplified our infrastructure, while still giving us high performance for business-critical applications, and that was mostly due to the arrival of clustered ONTAP,” said a Senior System Engineer who uses NetApp AFF at a government agency with over 10,000 employees. “Things really got a lot easier with that.” A Director of the Projects Department who uses NetApp AFF at Cyllene, a tech services company with more than 200 employees, found that NetApp ONTAP® data management software simplified their clients’ operations. As he said, “NetApp is simple to manage. You can grow and reduce the capacity, and you can create a backup copy through replication with SnapMirror and SnapVault.”

NetApp users also spoke to the value of the solution’s flexibility and efficiency. Cyllene’s Director of Projects felt that NetApp AFF’s most valuable feature was storage efficiency, due to its compression and deduplication. He said, “Our clients see return on their investment in AFF, due to the stability and efficiency. The efficiency is very important because we can buy fewer disks for more data.”

“In terms of the footprint, it is far more efficient,” said a Director of IT Infrastructure Services who uses NetApp AFF at a university with over 1,000 employees. “It has smaller, higher-capacity drives than our older unit. In terms of space, power, and cooling, it has simplified things.” Storage space efficiency also mattered to a Lead Storage Engineer who uses NetApp Cloud Volumes ONTAP at a university with over 10,000 employees. They use the solution for dev test data. They also put the data file for their Oracle Database on a Cloud Volumes ONTAP data file, which enables them to replicate and clone the Oracle Database very quickly and efficiently with minimal space consumption.

Efficiency arose in the form of deduplication for an AIX and Storage Specialist who uses NetApp AFF at a software company with over 1,000 employees. He shared, “When you have multiple systems with almost the same data, the deduplication helps save on capacity. This is very useful in the case where immediate space is required for an application or teams. It also provides good efficiency when provisioning deduplication compression. These efficiencies are very useful compared to other products.”



Oliver J.
Senior Systems Engineer at
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center



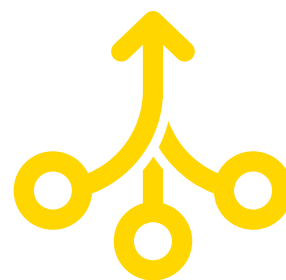
“You don’t need to spend time and resources planning and setting up physical storage equipment in your data center. Real estate in a data center is precious, so cost savings make Cloud Volumes enticing.”

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#2 Workload Consolidation

PeerSpot members reflected on why workload support, partnerships, and protocols led them to choose NetApp over competitors:

- “We looked at HPE, and because we were using Dell and EMC and IBM storage prior to moving to NetApp as our global standard, we considered them. When it comes to support for both file services and block services AFF is the top. The best.” – Executive Director of Global IT Infrastructure who uses NetApp AFF at a manufacturing company with over 1,000 employees
- “We’ve used Dell EMC in the past. We switched because NetApp definitely provides us with multi-protocol support and it is a one-stop solution.” – Assistant VP who uses NetApp Cloud Volumes ONTAP at an insurance company with over 1,000 employees
- “NetApp is a good choice because it’s not only for a normal application, but it can also integrate with NVIDIA for AI solutions.” – Solutions Consultant who uses NetApp AFF at a financial services firm with more than 5,000 employees
- “NetApp is very performant, very stable, and easy to manage. And when it comes to support for both file services and block services, NetApp is definitely better. We tried some of the competitors’ solutions and with them it’s not so easy. The NAS protocol is very good in NetApp.” – Director of the Projects Department who uses NetApp AFF at Cyllene



**Workload
Consolidation**



Senior Systems Engineer
at a computer software company
with 10,001+ employees



**“One of the reasons
why we went with
Cloud Volumes
ONTAP was that it
was easy to migrate
our on-prem solution
into AWS because of
SnapMirror.”**

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An Amazon Web Services (AWS) Solutions Architect who uses NetApp AFF at a pharma/biotech company with over 10,000 employees spoke to the issue of workload support when he said, “This solution helps accelerate demanding enterprise applications. VMware workloads, the database, and Oracle Solaris are hosted on AFF, which means that our primary priority workloads are on AFF and that the secondary ones are on FAS. That includes the SAN national cloud.”

SAP was the workload that mattered to a System Administrator who uses NetApp AFF at a leisure/travel company with over 1,000 employees. He said, “The speed of data retrieval is the most valuable feature. We mostly use it for our SAP database and we are getting good IO from the hard drive.”

Cyllene’s Director of Projects was one of several NetApp users who put the solution to work on VMware workloads. In his case, as he said, “We deploy it a lot for VMware environments and, with VMware, we have nearly all the client’s applications. We can have 500 or 1,000 virtual machines on the AFF. Sometimes they tell us that a compute application that, with earlier generations of storage solutions, took hours or days, takes much less time with AFF. For some customers, it takes three or four or five times less, with the new AFF.”

#3 Security and Data Protection

A PeerSpot member reflected on why security and data protection led them to choose NetApp over competitors:

- “We looked at Dell, Pure, and EMC, among other options. The Snapshotting, SnapMirror, SnapVault technologies, and just having all of those technologies, are really nice so that we can get a copy, SnapMirror, for example, in the data center, and we can have that spun up really quickly. That’s NetApp’s technology and that’s the advantage there.” – Storage Engineer who uses NetApp AFF at a religious institution with over 10,000 employees

Regarding security and data protection, a Principal DevOps Engineer at a tech services company with over 1,000 employees praised NetApp Cloud Volumes ONTAP by saying, “They provide extra security, backups, and many other features with it.” An Infrastructure Architect at a legal firm with more than 5,000 employees found that the ability to migrate and keep the status quo of protection of data was one of the greatest benefits of NetApp Cloud Volumes ONTAP.



**Data
Protection**

NetApp Snapshot™ copies, cloning, and deduplication were NetApp AFF’s most important data protection features for the pharma company’s AWS Solutions Architect. He said, “These features help with data protection. We host an exchange, so protecting our data and workloads is of prime importance.” Figure 2 shows this use case.



Figure 2 – How NetApp Snapshot works

#4 Cost Savings

PeerSpot members reflected on why cost savings factors led them to choose NetApp over competitors:

- “About 10 years ago we used to have EMC. Then we had both EMC and NetApp, and we ultimately replaced all the EMC with NetApp. Back then, we went with NetApp because of the cost. We got more for our dollar.” – Network Storage Engineer who uses NetApp AFF at a computer software company with over 10,000 employees
- “We thought about using Dell, however, when it came to cost-effectiveness, we stayed with NetApp. I like the way NetApp is coded and its maintenance configuration. I know how to set up a NetApp; I prefer that over Dell.” – Senior Linux SysAdmin who uses NetApp AFF at a small tech services company

PeerSpot members saved money in a variety of ways through their NetApp solutions. A Systems Management Engineer who uses NetApp AFF at a legal firm with more than 200 employees benefited from implementing all-flash, which shrank the firm’s data center footprint from 30 racks to just over five. “This is one of the biggest savings for us,” he said.



**Cost
Savings**



Arash E.

Lead Storage Engineer at a university
with 10,001+ employees



**“When we store
more data with the
solution, we can save
more money.”**

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Hardware was the place that a Technology Consultant saved money using NetApp Cloud Volumes ONTAP at a tech services company with more than 5,000 employees. In his case, the firm’s clients realized a return on investment because they didn’t need to purchase hardware. He revealed, “It’s much easier and quicker for them to get additional capacity when needed compared to an on-prem system. They save on costs associated with ordering additional storage for a physical on-prem system versus expanding what you have and you pay a little more in Azure. One client saw significant cost savings on their electricity bill. They reduced their bill by almost half just by shutting these things off.”

“When we store more data with the solution, we can save more money.” said the university’s Lead Storage Engineer. He added, “The savings depends on how many copies we make of each stage of the environment. If we need to clone the environment four times, then we save a lot of money. If we have to clone the data 10 times, then there are huge savings.”

The faster deployment speed of NetApp Cloud Volumes ONTAP, which translated into saving time, and therefore, money, was how a Senior Systems Engineer achieved savings at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, a healthcare company with more than 5,000 employees. He said, “One of the biggest selling points of Cloud Volumes is that you can deploy it quickly. You don’t need to spend time and resources planning and setting up physical storage equipment in your data center. Real estate in a data center is precious, so cost savings make Cloud Volumes enticing.”

#5 Cloud Support

Support for the cloud is a compelling selection factor for NetApp customers. According to a Solutions Consultant who uses NetApp AFF at a financial services firm with more than 5,000 employees, for instance, NetApp was advantageous because “it gives the customer options when they move their system to the cloud.” He went on to say, “I think the cloud solution from NetApp is very good for customers when they have a plan to use cloud services.”

“Being based on ONTAP makes migrating to the cloud much easier to take advantage of,” said a Senior Infrastructure Engineer who uses NetApp AFF at a wholesaler/distributor with over 10,000 employees. “We can figure out the cloud SVMs in a very similar fashion. That’s been a big help.”

A leisure/travel company with over 1,000 employees uses NetApp AFF to support cloud integration, according to their System Administrator. For a Senior Systems Engineer at a software company with over 10,000 employees, NetApp arrays enable his team to move their virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) environment into AWS. He said, “One of the reasons why we went with Cloud Volumes ONTAP was that it was easy to migrate our on-prem solution into AWS because of SnapMirror.”

Managing native cloud storage was the main purpose of NetApp Cloud Volumes ONTAP at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. Their Senior Systems Engineer elaborated, saying, “Cloud Volumes allows us to choose which storage types are applicable for us. In our case, it lets us choose a cheaper EBS storage, and then we can perform capacity tiering in [AWS] S3. It gives us the flexibility to determine which type of native AWS storage to use, which is cool.”



**Cloud
Support**

#6 Performance

A PeerSpot member reflected on why performance factors led them to choose NetApp over competitors:

- “We’ve used Dell EMC in the past, and we use Pure. We chose AFF primarily for the level of performance.” – Lead Infrastructure Engineer who uses NetApp AFF at a financial services firm with more than 200 employees

NetApp users do indeed value performance in their storage solutions. A Head of Infrastructure, Network & Security Management who uses NetApp AFF at Vos Logistics N.V., a logistics company with over 1,000 employees, put it this way: “We are using this product for performance and growth.” Sensa’s Storage Administrator concurred, noting, “AFF has helped to simplify our infrastructure, while still getting very high performance for our business-critical applications.”

“NetApp AFF has helped to simplify our infrastructure while still getting a very high performance,” said the tech services Senior Consultant. “Prior to setting up AFFs, we had latency issues. Now, things are more balanced, including the volumes that are on SAS or SATA.” Using NetApp AFF has also helped them reduce support issues, including performance-tuning.



Performance Factors

#7 Customer Experience

PeerSpot members reflected on why customer experience led them to choose NetApp over competitors:

- “For storage, we used both Dell and EMC. We switched because of the cost and the level of support. NetApp support is far better than anything we ever received from either Dell or EMC.” – Executive Director of Global IT Infrastructure who uses NetApp AFF at a manufacturing company with over 1,000 employees
- “We were using a different vendor for virtualization, then we switched to NetApp. The feedback from the VMware team is that things have improved. We were using Oracle Veritas previously. Sometimes, their technical support was not that user-friendly. While the hardware was good, it needs to be good going end-to-end. So, if we had an issue, then they were not as helpful, technical support-wise, as we have seen from NetApp.” – Senior Storage Administrator who uses NetApp AFF at a manufacturing company with over 10,000 employees
- “We have had such a good experience with NetApp that our next logical step up from our previous device was just another NetApp. NetApp has been reliable for us. Their technologies have been rock-solid. That is why we felt comfortable going from their older model to their newer model, AFF, rather than looking for a new vendor.” – Director of IT Infrastructure Services who uses NetApp AFF at a university with over 1,000 employees

PeerSpot members were pleased with NetApp support, with the legal firm’s Systems Management Engineer saying, “The technical support has always been really helpful.” The financial services Solutions Consultant similarly noted, “NetApp technical support is very professional and good.”



Daniel Rúnar F.
Storage Administrator
at Sensa ehf.



“AFF has helped to simplify our infrastructure, while still getting very high performance for our business-critical applications.”

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Conclusion

Storage managers have choices when it comes to solving today's storage management and data protection challenges. As PeerSpot members who selected NetApp over solutions from Pure Storage, Dell, and others explain, seven main factors drove their choices. They considered issues like quality of storage management features, as well as the solution's efficiency and flexibility. In addition to storage performance, they looked at cloud support, customer experience, workload support, and cost savings. These selection factors came together to favor NetApp over competing offerings on the market.

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