



NetApp®

Success Story

Authenticom Speeds Implementations and Increases Sales with Agile FlexPod Datacenter Solutions



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KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Industry

Automotive data solutions provider

The Challenge

Strengthen SLAs, speed deployment of critical applications, and improve IT agility to enhance client satisfaction and competitive edge.

The Solution

Deploy FlexPod® Datacenter solutions by NetApp and Cisco to support two active-active high-performance data centers.

Benefits

- Double performance for core applications to optimize data analysis, batch processing, and data hygiene services
- Support industry-leading SLAs with five-9s availability
- Deploy new applications up to 75% faster

Customer Profile

Every day, thousands of clients rely on Authenticom, Inc.'s automotive data solutions to manage and monetize the value of their data to improve sales, enhance customer service, and grow their businesses. Seamlessly integrating with more than 75 dealer management systems (DMSs) and connecting with over 20,000 dealerships being serviced nightly, Authenticom's data management offerings go beyond the scope and scale of other solutions. They are designed to deliver a broad base of business intelligence that helps strengthen the impact of auto-dealer marketing, customer relationship management (CRM), business development, and third-party service provider initiatives.

Authenticom's made-to-order solutions are accessible via an online client portal, VPN, or FTP. The solutions touch all aspects of client operations, from DMS transactional data extraction and batch processing services to inventory control to data enhancement solutions that optimize the management of customer contact points to bring in more business.

The Challenge

Eliminate barriers to growth

The rising popularity of Authenticom's customizable automotive data solutions,

along with its commitment to service excellence, has led to a tremendous upsurge in business. Over the past year alone, the company's client base has doubled.

With data growth rates approaching 18TB every 9 to 12 months, along with the acquisition and release of new products and services, the company's existing storage infrastructure was nearing capacity. Dwindling storage reserves had the potential to slow progress as each new virtual server deployed placed increasing demand on existing clusters. Also at a premium was processing power, which made core activities such as data extraction and DMS polling more difficult. A lack of processing power could also hinder timely delivery of sales, service, and inventory reports, as well as other pertinent customer information.

Strengthen competitive stance

To effectively compete against some of the largest automotive data solutions companies and better attract and retain more business, Authenticom required a more powerful and scalable IT infrastructure. After several business consulting sessions with NetApp Gold Partner Netech, Authenticom decision makers chose a FlexPod Datacenter solution by NetApp and Cisco.

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Brian Clements

Chief Architecture Officer, Authenticom, Inc.

With its flexible, integrated compute, networking, and storage environment, FlexPod Datacenter addressed the company’s key IT goals. Supported by FlexPod, Authenticom could consistently achieve exceptional levels of performance and availability to sustain unrivaled SLAs for improved extraction and delivery of DMS polling data throughout the day. It could also facilitate faster innovation and better promote business and revenue growth for itself and its clients.

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The Solution **A tailored fit**

A comprehensive understanding of Authenticom’s business and operational requirements, combined with FlexPod implementation expertise, enabled Netech to accurately size and quickly deploy dual FlexPod Datacenter solutions—one at the company’s La Crosse, Wisconsin, site and the other at a new, highly secure Savvis-hosted site in Chicago, Illinois.

Implemented within three months, the new 63TB NetApp and Cisco-based

infrastructure supports an active-active configuration designed to protect and preserve operations at both sites. “The Netech team not only helped us assess requirements for compute power and growth going forward, but also enabled us to better leverage the benefits of virtualization and strengthen our environment from both RPO and RTO perspectives,” says Clements. “The install was well planned and went smoothly.”

Built for speed and agility

Today, NetApp® FAS6220HA and FAS6210HA systems running the NetApp Data ONTAP® 8.0 operating system in 7-Mode and fortified with NetApp Flash Cache™ technology and encrypted disk provide a state-of-the-art storage foundation for Authenticom’s FlexPod infrastructure spanning two sites. A third NetApp FAS2240 system supports testing and development. Compute and networking components within Authenticom’s FlexPod Datacenter environment include three Cisco® Unified Computing System™ (UCS®) 5108 Series blade server chassis with a total of 12 UCS B200 M3 blade servers installed; Cisco Nexus® 5000 and 2000 Series switches serving as a data center aggregation point; and two Cisco UCS 6296UP 96-port fabric interconnects.

Combined with VMware® virtualization technology, NetApp and Cisco solutions form a high-performance, high-density

infrastructure stack able to deliver the power and scalability needed to address the challenges of a rapidly growing company. As an example, Authenticom recently expanded its offerings with the acquisition and integration of Ryan Tech automotive technology. It now has the ability to process inventory images and enhance the inventory management experience for its dealers.

Integrated, efficient IT administration

Managing and protecting expanding volumes of data, overseeing data management processes, and quickly provisioning IT resources for new projects are tall orders for a busy IT department of any size. FlexPod Datacenter makes it easier with powerful tools such as NetApp OnCommand® System Manager and NetApp Virtual Storage Console (VSC) for VMware vSphere®. Designed to enhance visibility and simplify and automate repetitive tasks, these tools facilitate single-pane monitoring and end-to-end storage management across both physical and virtual infrastructures.

“NetApp tools make management of the SAN exceedingly simple,” says Clements. “The fact that we can monitor all of our storage on a daily basis simplifies planning. Provisioning volumes for our VMware virtual machines on NetApp storage is also fast and easy with the VSC plug-in. We can do it straight through the vCenter console,

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which we also use to manage other virtual machine properties.”

Time-saving NetApp MultiStore® vFiler® units, or virtual storage controllers, are leveraged within Authenticom’s CIFS environment to support complex directory structures and naming for massive amounts of data. “With NetApp MultiStore capabilities, our IT team can emulate Microsoft Windows sharing servers, but don’t have to worry about the upkeep involved with full Windows installs, which further streamlines management,” says Clements.

Fast, cost-efficient backups and easy restores are facilitated by NetApp SnapProtect® software in conjunction with NetApp Snapshot™ technology and CommVault Simpana software. NetApp SnapMirror® disaster recovery capabilities support replication between Authenticom’s two data centers.

Together, these solutions provide a cohesive data protection and business continuity strategy.

“We use SnapProtect to move Snapshot copies off NetApp storage to support an ‘off-device’ backup to less expensive nonproduction storage,” explains Clements. “SnapMirror provides disaster recovery protection for our business-critical data and will also enable us to make multiple active sites a possibility in the future.”

Business Benefits

Less risk

Because Authenticom’s business relies on the ability to quickly receive, analyze, manage, and disseminate information assets every day, the company couldn’t afford a complicated and potentially risky data center deployment. Fully integrated and pretested for viability, FlexPod Datacenter offered Authenticom the best way to deploy, maintain, and grow its new infrastructure—both physically and virtually—without putting the business at risk.

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Faster service, higher security, and five-9s availability

Responsible for processing and managing more than a billion records a year, Authenticom relies on its FlexPod Datacenter solutions to deliver a steady stream of information intelligence to help auto dealerships drive greater profitability across all areas of their business. Performance-boosting NetApp Flash Cache technology on the NetApp systems is of particular benefit to Authenticom’s VMware virtual server

environment, which supports 90% of the company’s applications, including data polling, data hygiene, real-time web services, and DMS updates.

“Since our FlexPod Datacenter deployment we have seen performance rates double for many applications, including those involving analytics, batch processing, and list clean-up,” says Clements. “This enables us to deliver business intelligence faster and also provide data enhancement services to improve the effectiveness of a customer’s direct mail, e-mail, or telemarketing campaigns.”

The ability to consistently support five-9s availability across both data centers with advanced SnapMirror replication capabilities has also helped Authenticom strengthen its already industry-leading SLAs. In addition, NetApp encrypted disk is built into both FAS6000 series systems, protecting the company’s data against unauthorized access. “Encrypted disk is a big selling point for us. We are the only company in our industry that provides its clients with such a high level of security and risk management,” says Clements.

Broader offerings, unimpeded growth

Freed from the constraints of its old infrastructure, Authenticom fully leverages FlexPod Datacenter solutions to deliver high-performance, on-demand IT resources and the infrastructure agility needed to support massive data growth,

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quickly on-board new clients, and expand its portfolio of offerings. Today, setting up data delivery for new clients occurs five times faster, while applications can be deployed up to 75% sooner. Bolstered by this improved responsiveness, Authenticom can quickly roll out innovative new services such as the company's automotive valuation service based on Kelly Blue Book and Black Book data.

“FlexPod Datacenter solutions enable us to improve time to value for our clients, freely grow our company, and take it in new directions as quickly as market demands dictate,” concludes Clements.

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SOLUTION COMPONENTS

FlexPod Components

NetApp FAS6220HA, FAS6210HA, and FAS2240 storage systems

Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS) 5108 Series blade server chassis with 12 UCS B200 M3 blade servers

Cisco Nexus 5000 and 2000 Series switches

Cisco UCS 6296UP 96-port fabric interconnects

Virtualization Components

VMware vSphere 5.1

VMware vCenter Server 5.1

NetApp Software

NetApp Data ONTAP version 8.0 operating in 7-Mode

NetApp MultiStore and vFiler units

NetApp OnCommand System Manager

NetApp Snapshot technology

NetApp SnapMirror

NetApp SnapProtect

NetApp Virtual Storage Console for VMware vSphere

Third-Party Products

Authenticom automotive data management and enhancement solutions

CommVault Simpana

Protocols

CIFS

Partner

Netech

www.netechcorp.com



www.netapp.com

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Go further, faster®

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