



COMPELLENT SAN DRIVES CUSTOMER SERVICE AND PROFITS FOR SERVICE PROVIDER



Utah's Center 7, a hybrid co-location center, provides managed IT infrastructure and hosting services for small businesses that need more advanced technology and larger organizations that want to offload complex administration. To keep prices reasonable for smaller customers, while providing robust service offerings that can scale as organizations' demand, Center

7 has embraced operational efficiency. In the data center, a storage area network (SAN) from Compellent® gave the company the efficiency it needed to drive customer service and profits.

Center 7 customers' span all industries, from telecommunications to software and financial companies. Supporting the performance needs of such a wide range of customers demanded a scalable, easy-to-manage infrastructure that enables a variety of service packages and prices. Before installing the Compellent SAN, however, an inability to easily scale advanced services began limiting Center 7's ability to quickly react to its customers' changing needs and show a return on technology investment.

Jeff Brooks, Center 7's vice president of engineering, was familiar with long nights working on a SAN. "I've spent hours making sure that a client is set up correctly, trying to get everything to talk to each other. Once I got it going, I would tell people not to breathe on it," he explains. Administrative headaches didn't stop there. To leverage the cost-savings of tiered storage, Center 7 dedicated staff to manually archive old customer data and transfer it between storage tiers. Making matters worse, Center 7 had unused storage, which translated to little or no return on its hardware investment.

AUTOMATED TIERED STORAGE INCREASES PERFORMANCE AND DRIVES CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Compellent quickly changed the manual tiering headaches. Compellent's Data Progression™ automatically classifies and moves data at the block level between tiers of storage based on frequency of access. Not only does this reduce administrative time for Center 7's staff, it also enables the company to provide a new value-added service offering to its customers. Data can be cost-efficiently stored on the technology appropriate for each client's specific cost and performance requirements. Customers can choose to have data sit entirely on high-capacity Tier 3 SATA drives, entirely on high-speed Tier 1 drives or on a combination of the two—without extra work on behalf of Center 7's administrators.

CENTER SEVEN

"With Compellent, we get the performance our clients expect, and I'm getting easy administration that's light years ahead of other SANs we've worked with."

JEFF BROOKS
Vice President of Engineering
Center 7

RESULTS REPORTED BY CENTER 7

- » Automated Tiered Storage eliminates the need for dedicated data classification staff and enables Center 7 to increase service offerings and revenue
- » Thin Provisioning maximizes disk utilization and minimizes up-front investment
- » Ease of management reduces operating expenses, increases efficiencies and drives customer satisfaction
- » Enterprise Manager improves storage monitoring and reporting, allowing Center 7 to streamline data management and offer additional customer conveniences

OPERATING SYSTEMS

- » Microsoft® Windows®
- » Linux®

KEY APPLICATIONS

- » Microsoft Exchange
- » Microsoft SQL Server®

ADVANCED FEATURES HELP CENTER 7 INCREASE VALUE PROPOSITION

Compellent helps Center 7 further differentiate itself as a world-class co-location facility with advanced features including robust disaster recovery and local recovery options. With Compellent Replays (snapshots), Center 7 staff can help customers recover from data hazards in minutes, compared to hours. And Compellent's Thin Replication will allow Center 7 to offer robust disaster recovery services at a competitive price by replicating space-efficient Replays over IP using existing networks and infrastructure.

"Our Compellent SANs have become an integral part of our offering. They go beyond a basic tool to actively contribute to our bottom line."

JEFF SWAIN
Vice President of Sales
Center 7

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Because Data Progression requires little administration, Center 7 has reduced overhead while increasing service options. If a customer isn't getting the performance needed, a simple call to a Center 7 engineer can implement tiered storage in as little as a day. "It's all completely seamless to everybody," says Brooks. "With Compellent, we get the performance our clients expect, and I'm getting easy administration that's light years ahead of other SANs we've worked with."

LOWER START-UP COSTS AND SCALABILITY LEAD TO QUICK ROI

With high-performance Tier 1 drives dedicated only to the data that needs it, Center 7 was able to purchase half as many Fibre Channel drives as expected. "Compellent allows us to use our existing storage resources more effectively," says Brooks. "We haven't had to add additional costly Tier 1 drives despite extending a new service to our customers."

Furthermore, Compellent's Thin Provisioning separates storage allocation from utilization, enabling Center 7 to increase disk utilization and eliminate the nearly impossible capacity planning that accompanies new business. New customers and existing clients alike can be allocated a virtual volume of any size they desire up-front, but the thin-provisioned Compellent SAN will only consume actual disk space when data is written to the application. "There have been few times when I've been this excited about a system that will actually generate revenue for us—especially without having to invest tons of money," says Brooks. "Instead of incurring a huge expense when we sign up a new customer, we can organically add capacity that supports our entire client base. By the time we do need to add capacity, it will already be paid for."

EASY MANAGEMENT LOWERS OPERATING EXPENSES AND IMPROVES CUSTOMER SERVICE

When it comes to managing technology, automation drives the bottom line for Center 7. Due to the Compellent SAN, Center 7 is able to efficiently operate three data centers with a staff of only 15—including storage management. Compellent's Enterprise Manager software provides automated daily reports and a C-level storage infrastructure. Reporting features like these help Center 7 provide customers with a portal for tracking performance, bandwidth, recovery options and more. By simply logging into a Web site, customers can see virtually every facet of their system in one integrated dashboard. They benefit from immediate feedback while Center 7's engineers benefit from fewer phone calls and streamlined trouble ticketing.

"If we have to add an extra body or two to manage storage, it would have a direct impact on our margin," says Brooks. "With our previous SANs, I had to dedicate an employee to do many of the things that Compellent does automatically."

Enterprise Manager also enables Center 7 to set thresholds to notify engineers and the customer if an account is near full-storage capacity. An account manager can then easily sell the customer more storage space—one more way a Compellent Storage Center™ SAN has helped Center 7 increase efficiencies, customer service and profits. "If I had to go back to one of the SANs I've used in the past, it would be like trying to work in the dark," says Brooks. "With Compellent on our team, Center 7 is prepared to offer world-class service no matter how larger or diverse our client base."