



Success Story

Audio-Technica chose FlexPod® to support an ambitious and aggressive growth drive into the European retail market



Another NetApp solution delivered by:



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Industry

Audio equipment

The Challenge

To support an aggressive expansion drive into the European retail market, Audio-Technica needed a new storage platform that would underpin and help drive forward new business.

The Solution

Replace its existing storage platform with FlexPod Express Medium Configuration.

Benefits

- Supports aggressive expansion drive
- Delivers cloud services to satellite offices
- High performance
- Sensible price/performance ratio
- Scalable and easy to use

Customer Profile

Established in 1962, Audio-Technica is a global company that designs, manufactures, markets, and distributes high-quality audio equipment. In the 1960s the company established a reputation as a manufacturer of state-of-the-art phonograph cartridges and today continues to receive kudos as a high-end manufacturer of high-performance microphones, headphones, wireless systems, mixers, and electronic products for both home and professional audio use.

The company has won numerous industry awards for its range of products, which define new benchmarks for quality, durability, and price/performance standards. Its equipment is used across a wide range of areas, from live sound tours, broadcast, and recording studios to corporate and government facilities, house-of-worship venues, and so on. More recently it was charged with providing audio equipment for broadcasting both the Grammys and the 2014 winter games around the world.

The Challenge

The company has an unassailable reputation among professional sound engineers and broadcasting studios. It also provides a wide range

of consumer equipment such as headphones for mobile music players. Within this sector, in Japan, for example, it is number one in terms of volume market share.

Audio-Technica wanted to replicate this retail success in its European market and charged Adrian Rooke, managing director of Audio-Technica's UK operations, with extending its reach into the European consumer market. In practice, this meant setting up a retail channel and driving its products into major European retailers such as Dixons Group, Fnac, and Media Markt.

Adrian Rooke explains: "We have an extensive range of consumer products and, in Japan, for instance, we are the retail market leader in headphones by volume. We wanted to replicate this across EMEA by driving an aggressive expansion into the European retail market."

As a result it was looking to upgrade its ERP environment to SQL AX2012 V3. However, because of an ageing infrastructure, a server and storage environment refresh was required to support the planned expansion and growth.

Its existing storage platform wasn't robust enough to support what in effect would be direct relationships with a raft of distributors and retailers.

“By moving into the retail sector in an aggressive fashion across Europe and bringing new distributors on board we need a storage platform that can support this. FlexPod gives us this and is vitally important in driving forward our growth.”

Robert Morgan-Males
Marketing Director, Audio-Technica

Adrian Rooke adds, “We are aiming for markets such as the Middle East and Africa. Our existing storage platform needed upgrading to support this expansion, but after speaking to our storage vendor it was clear that within the five years we have been using this storage platform it has not really moved on in terms of functionality or performance.”

The Solution

The company works closely with IT partner Concorde IT Group, one of the UK's leading IT support and services providers. Following an extensive consultation, both companies decided that a move to a NetApp FlexPod storage platform was the right decision. “When Audio Technica approached us, they wanted a new infrastructure platform that would enable their expansion strategy into the European retail market and we were delighted to get involved. The choice for us was really simple. FlexPod”.
Matthew Wood, Group Sales Director at Concorde.

Adrian Rooke said, “It clearly provided us with a best-of-breed, highly efficient, converged platform to grow the business and, importantly, is supported and prevalidated by industry-leading vendors.”

In terms of the components, the platform is a FlexPod Express Medium Configuration, which incorporates four Cisco UCS® C220 servers and a NetApp FAS2240 storage system with up to 15TB of usable storage.

It also includes a NetApp DS2246-21.6Tb 24x900GB disk designed to double storage density, increase performance density by as much as 60%, and reduce power consumption by up to 50%.

At one level the NetApp FAS2240 is a storage platform designed to steadily evolve over time as business requirements grow, without having to perform complicated data migrations to move from one platform to the next. However, NetApp FAS2240 also includes high-performance I/O options, including 10GbE and 8Gb Fibre Channel, to help eliminate the possibility of network bottlenecks, an important point given the increased amount of data that would be running into the system.

The solution is engineered to enable the full utilization of these high-performance I/O options while also reducing space requirements with a footprint optimized for deployment in a minimum amount of space. NetApp FAS2240 also includes the same service processor management system used on NetApp midrange and high-end platforms, giving it a powerful engine.

Business Benefits **Underpinning an aggressive expansion drive**

The FlexPod platform provides a foundation for Audio-Technica business, underpinning its ERP system and line-of-business applications, which are critical in driving its expansion plans. Robert Morgan-Males, marketing director, Audio-Technica, says, “By moving into the retail sector in an aggressive fashion across Europe and bringing new distributors on board we need a storage platform that can support this. FlexPod gives us this and is vitally important in driving forward our growth.”

“FlexPod is a very important component in our plans to deliver cloud services to our satellite offices. It provides a platform for expansion across EMEA and is a reliable and robust storage platform that gives us what we need.”

Adrian Rooke
Managing Director, Audio-Technica

Cloud services to Europe

An important element in Audio-Technica’s growth plans is using its IT infrastructure to provide cloud-based services to its offices in Paris and Frankfurt. Adrian Rooke says, “FlexPod is a very important component in our plans to deliver cloud services to our satellite offices, it’s a reliable and robust storage platform that gives us what we need.”

Sensible price and performance

Rooke adds, “One of the compelling features that FlexPod delivers is its price to performance ratio. It’s sensible and allows us to expand our capacity at a reasonable cost, and we’re certainly going to be benefiting from this as we move forward.”

Scalability and easy-to-use functionality

A further benefit of the FlexPod platform is its scalability. Rooke states, “FlexPod provides us with all we need; it’s the complete package and can easily scale up to meet growing business requirements. It’s easy to add new business services onto the platform. When we compared it to our previous storage platform it was a long way ahead in terms of performance, flexibility, and scalability.”

Three-year support

An important component within Audio-Technica’s adoption of FlexPod is three years of full support. “By speaking to Concorde IT Group we know that NetApp is extremely responsive to support requests, and while we’re not envisaging any problems it’s certainly reassuring to know this,” adds Rooke.

SOLUTION COMPONENTS

- NetApp FAS2240 storage system
- NetApp DS2246-21.6Tb 24x900GB disk shelf
- 4x Cisco UCS C220 servers
- 2x Cisco Nexus® 3048 switches

Partner

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