



ARES MANAGEMENT INVESTS IN COMPELLENT TO SUPPORT SKYROCKETING GROWTH



At Ares Management, success grows out of solid fundamentals. Headquartered in Los Angeles, with offices in New York and London, the global investment firm specializes in both private equity and leveraged finance markets, currently managing approximately \$16 billion in assets. Founded in 1997, Ares enjoyed steady success and growth until business

skyrocketed in the last few years.

As Ares added analysts and operations staff at an aggressive rate, Ping Ooi, Associate Vice President of Technology, says his team struggled to keep the company's IT infrastructure humming, especially in the Los Angeles-based data center where the company's Microsoft® Exchange e-mail servers and central databases were kept on individual servers with internal storage.

"We kept blowing past our growth projections, so we were constantly adding file systems and storage capacity," says Ooi. To manage the rapid growth, Ooi worked with the Ares executive team to develop a detailed IT strategy that included virtualizing the company's servers and storage. Ooi had worked with storage area networks (SANs) before and knew that a SAN would provide a foundation for the virtualization project, enable faster access to the company's data and simplify the IT team's management and maintenance tasks.

After an intensive evaluation of potential vendors, the Ares team decided to immediately implement two Compellent® Storage Center™ SANs, one in Los Angeles and one in the New York branch office. The company plans to add a third SAN at its London office in the near future. "We took eight-months to look at every SAN vendor we could find, but Compellent was in a class by itself when we compared management capabilities, structure, technology and performance," says Ooi.

CUTTING COSTS AND IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

With the Compellent Storage Center 4.0 SAN in place, Ooi has been able to cost-effectively increase the capacity and performance of the storage infrastructure at Ares. Using Compellent's Automated Tiered Storage, called Data Progression™, the IT team dynamically moved 25 percent of the company's infrequently accessed data to lower-speed storage without laborious classification.

Compellent's automated data tiering enabled Ooi to buy fewer high-speed, high energy drives, and store more data on high capacity, low-energy drives. As a result, Ares was able to lower storage costs by roughly \$70,000. "Before Compellent I spent \$120,000 just on disk drives," Ooi said. "With Compellent, I can spend \$50,000 on lower-cost SATA



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RESULTS REPORTED BY ARES MANAGEMENT

- » Fast Track expected to improve performance by 33 percent
- » Automated Tiered Storage cuts hardware costs by an estimated \$70,000 per year
- » Improved storage performance reduces nightly report calculation times by an estimated 45 percent
- » Asynchronous replication occurs between offices with little impact on network performance
- » Storage virtualization helps eliminate 10 physical servers and reduce power consumption by 25 percent
- » High availability and improved business continuity help ensure global 24/7 operations

OPERATING SYSTEMS

- » Microsoft Windows Server 2000

KEY APPLICATIONS

- » Microsoft SQL Server
- » VMware ESX Server

COPILOT SERVICES

Copilot Services, Compellent's comprehensive customer service and technical support center, provides expert support during planning and installation. For Compellent customers, this means that Compellent engineers are available to help optimize systems for their specific environment, and to help conduct performance and capacity reviews. Compellent Copilot Services helps Ares Management be sure that its storage investment is operating at peak efficiency.

"The Copilot support team was instrumental in helping us plan our implementation and recovery process, which helped us clear a difficult and expensive Sarbanes-Oxley Act regulatory requirement."

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drives to increase capacity while maintaining the same level of service to Ares users."

The Ares IT team immediately saw improved application performance after implementing the Compellent SAN. For example, running nightly reports at the Los Angeles data center used to take nearly six hours; now, it can be completed in three hours.

The IT team plans to further increase performance by using Compellent's new Fast Track feature, which optimizes data placement on the hard drive at the block level. "By reserving the outer edge of each drive for critical data, and dynamically placing the most active blocks, we expect that Fast Track can shave 33 percent off the calculation times of large processes," says Ooi.

(DOWN)TIME IS MONEY

The security of financial transactions and governmental regulations require historic and accurate data. Compellent's Data Instant Replay™ software helps Ooi increase data availability, accelerating the recovery process and simplifying regulatory compliance.

"Previously, restoring data could take anywhere from 6 to 24 hours, with a premium charge for urgent cases," says Ooi. "With the Compellent SAN, we can recover a folder or a file in anywhere from three to 10 minutes."

"Although we haven't had the need to restore data in the last six months, auditors require that we keep our data online for eight weeks," said Ooi. "Compellent allows us to meet regulatory standards by automatically maintaining eight weeks' of daily snapshots."

In the financial industry, time really is money. With Compellent's Remote Instant Replay™, Ooi can asynchronously replicate Ares data between SANs in New York and Los Angeles. Compellent replication helps the Ares IT team keep critical data accessible at all times no matter where an employee is working.

"In our business, with billion-dollar deals on the line, downtime is not an option," says Ooi. "We needed a solution that could keep us up and running during routine maintenance. Compellent's Enterprise Manager completely

automates the replication process, which saves us a tremendous amount of time. All of the essential data is available on one screen and we can not only project storage needs, we can reliably predict where replications are and when certain processes will be complete around the globe."

Plus, the bandwidth optimization features of Remote Instant Replay enable the Ares IT team to throttle bandwidth based on line speed or time of day—ensuring that replication does not adversely affect network performance for Ares employees.

VIRTUALIZATION SAVES GREEN

Beyond performance and replication, Ooi is particularly pleased with how easily the Compellent SAN has integrated into the Ares IT infrastructure, especially the company's virtualization strategy. By virtualizing its server resources, the Ares IT team has been able to eliminate 10 physical servers, reducing energy consumption in the company's power-limited Los Angeles facility with no drop in service levels to end users. "We've dropped power usage from an average usage of 40 amps per circuit to about 29 amps per circuit," comments Ooi.

"Compellent works with our VMware® ESX Server® farm absolutely seamlessly," says Ooi. "Mapping the pool of virtualized storage to virtual servers is simple enough that any of the technical staff can do it, which means that I don't have to hire SAN specialists for each of three offices."

The Compellent SAN has already surpassed the original return on investment and performance analyses conducted by the Ares IT team. But for Ooi, the most important number is two, which represents the weekend days that he no longer has to work.

"I used to go into work seven days a week, and my guys were here on weekends all the time," says Ooi. "Ares has become a 24/7 business, and with Compellent, we can run better than ever before and still have time for strategic projects. That's a result everyone feels good about."