

Florida Credit Union Gets 10x Better RTO with a One Year Payback



GROW FINANCIAL CASE STUDY



Financial Services
www.growfinancial.org

Challenge

When drives regularly began failing, Grow Financial sought a storage upgrade to improve system availability but the high cost of its incumbent solution led the organization to look elsewhere.

Results

- 40% faster reboots
- 75% less data center space and power
- 67% less storage
- 80% less storage management time
- At least a 1/3 reduction in backup time
- Snapshots taken 3x more often
- Added capacity at 1/3 the cost
- 20% overall reduction in storage-related costs

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James Stock
VP of IT

Company Challenge

Failing Drives Tax the IT Team

Grow Financial Federal Credit Union has come a long way since it began in a broom closet in 1955 at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, FL. Today, the organization has expanded to 28 locations across two states and manages assets of \$2.4 billion.

For James Stock, VP of IT, the challenge lies in keeping more than 200 systems updated, protected, and running smoothly while minimizing operating costs. Business-critical applications include the core banking support systems, loan processing applications, and the home banking website, which run on a mix of 95% virtualized Dell and Cisco servers. As the credit union’s Dell SC SAN reached the five-year mark, drives began failing regularly, often soon after the team had just finished rebalancing LUNs. Yet the high cost of upgrading to a newer Dell solution, plus annual maintenance fees, led Stock to look for other options.

Results

Datrium ‘Just Made Better Sense’

The credit union evaluated Pure Storage, Nutanix, and Datrium, among others, before choosing Datrium’s Automatrix platform. In a single, hardware-agnostic solution, Grow Financial would gain global deduplication and compression, end-to-end encryption, and the ability to manage storage centrally in vCenter, all for a fraction of the price of alternatives.

“With Datrium, there was line after line of things that just made better sense,” Stock said. “Datrium is unique in how it leverages commodity flash in the front end on the host and low-cost disk on the back end storage node, to achieve high performance in a very cost-effective package. We could put in any ESXi host and it would just work, so we could leverage our existing combination of Cisco and Dell hardware.”

Less Data Center Space, Power, and Storage

With global deduplication, erasure coding, and compression, the credit union cut its data storage use by 67% – even after some banking systems compressed and encrypted data prior to it going onto the Datrium DVX. With that efficiency, Grow Financial needed 75% less data center space and power to keep systems running and cool, helping James meet his primary business objective of minimizing operating costs.

Faster Reboots Boosts Employee Productivity

For monthly updates, the credit union saw about a 40% reduction in reboot time with the move to Datrium. Stock estimated the organization gained back more than a week of productivity each quarter.

For the call center in particular, reboots sped up by 3X, from 15 minutes to five minutes on average. That's 10 additional minutes that agents can take care of customers. "Fifteen minutes could feel like an eternity when your call center is down in the middle of the day," Stock said.

The same goes for reboots of the web server, which powers the website where customers may be checking balances or applying for loans any time of the day.

"Because of Datrium's high availability and performance, I spend much less time worrying about systems being down," Stock said. "Even in the middle of the night people are still applying for loans. We're not waiting on the infrastructure, which helps shorten the duration of an outage, increasing our availability for members."

10x Faster RTO, 3x Better RPO in Hurricane Alley

Datrium DVX also included built-in capabilities for protecting and restoring the credit union's backup data, with local backup copies sharing the same data pool as primary data. This means recovery time (RTO) is minutes compared to an hour with the separate Exagrid and Veeam systems. Snapshots are nearly instantaneous and have no impact on running applications, so the company takes snapshots 3x more often than it did previously.

Even recovery from their DR location is faster and can be completed in 10-15 minutes with Datrium, compared to 3x longer with previous systems.

80% Less Time on Storage Management

The Grow Financial IT team also eliminated approximately 80% of storage management time, giving the team back about a day each week. IT staffers manage storage right in vCenter with Datrium.

"My network engineer saved the equivalent of a day when he set up three servers recently – because he didn't have to wait," Stock said. "Over a month, we save about 3-4 days provisioning new hosts because there's less time on LUNs, no rebalancing, and no waiting. That means we're not holding up business processes waiting for the SAN."

20% OpEx Reduction and One Year Payback

Grow Financial added capacity, performance and functionality – while reducing its annual operating costs by about 20% when the credit union factors in eliminating annual maintenance costs and the fact that it can upgrade capacity for just one-third the cost of other solutions. In the first year alone, IT saved enough to pay for the entire Datrium system at their primary site.

Beyond Datrium's economics, Stock appreciates the company's dedication to and pace of product advancement, with regular releases and in-demand additions to the solution. "They're able to move really quickly," he added. "To make those inroads in such a short time is impressive."

About Grow Financial Federal Credit Union

In 1955, Grow Financial Federal Credit Union began in a broom closet at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, FL. Today, it manages assets of \$2.4 billion for over 200,000 members with 28 locations across two states. For the past seven years, the credit union has earned a spot on Tampa Bay's Top Workplace list, with two appearances at #1.

Learn more about Datrium at www.datrium.com

