



## UNIQUE SOLUTIONS REJECTS STATUS QUO AND SELECTS UTILITY STORAGE

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### INDUSTRY

Retail Services

#### CUSTOMER

UniquE Solutions: a leading application service provider for the retail industry. They provide in-store promotion and inventory management tracking services to the retail industry ([www.unisolinc.com](http://www.unisolinc.com)).

#### SITUATION

UniquE needed a more robust storage environment to handle increasing customer demands. Their existing environment consisted of embedded disk drives within individual servers. They began an evaluation of several storage vendors that included 3PAR, HP and EMC.

#### 3PAR SOLUTION

3PAR InServ® S400  
3PAR InForm® Operating System  
3PAR Access Guard  
3PAR Full Copy

#### RESULTS

With 3PAR, UniquE realized immediate results, saving money, improving resource allocation, increasing performance and reducing deployment time.

They also achieved:

- Reduced storage management time from 6 hours per day to 30 minutes per day.
- Delayed \$60K SAN fabric acquisition.
- Boosted performance by 30-40%.
- Deployment in one day with no training: “With 3PAR, you don’t have to be a storage expert.”

### OVERVIEW

UniquE Solutions provides in-store promotion and inventory management tracking services to the retail industry. Their solution is utilized by manufacturers whose products must be prominently displayed within stores, retail service agencies who contract with manufacturers to ensure their inventory and in-store displays are managed properly, and finally, the retailers themselves. UniquE’s services have been implemented by large retailers such as Lowe’s and Toys “R” Us.

With UniquE Solutions, field representatives employed by retail services agencies can report critical data regarding in-store product displays and inventory counts to their respective product manufacturers. Using PDA systems running UniquE’s custom software, field reps record and track a variety of data that can be shared with product manufacturers. This data includes photographs of in-store displays and product placement, bar code scanning, inventory counts and signature capture.

### SITUATION

UniquE Solution’s storage requirements began to increase as the company began to add more customers. UniquE had to respond to greater customer demand by building a robust storage environment that could handle very large capacity requirements. UniquE’s storage environment consisted of embedded disk drives within individual servers. Whenever the IT team added more capacity, they had to rebuild entire systems. This became complex, was difficult to manage and caused a huge storage administration “time sink” for the team. As a result, the IT department began searching for another alternative.

Their search led them to evaluate several solutions: the 3PAR InServ® S400, EMC CX600, and HP EVA 5000.

Four factors led UniquE to select 3PAR: (1) The 3PAR InServ was the easiest system to learn and administer; (2) it was the most cost effective solution; (3) they could start with a small affordable deployment but could still scale to a large configuration over time; and (4) the performance and speed outpaced all other applications.

### 3PAR SOLUTION

UniquE Solutions installed a 3PAR InServ S400 equipped with 3PAR’s InForm® Operating System, which delivers volume management and storage virtualization. UniquE also purchased Access Guard for LUN security and Full Copy, one of 3PAR’s point-in-time copy solutions. Host servers run Microsoft® Windows® and Linux. Applications include Microsoft SQL Server®, Microsoft® Exchange® and in-house applications.

## "With 3PAR you don't have to be a storage expert."

### **COST EFFECTIVE: SMALL DEPLOYMENT THAT SCALES DRAMATICALLY**

UniquE Solutions needed a system that could grow as their storage requirements expanded over time. Each new customer that UniquE acquires could add as much as 10TBs in storage capacity. Rapid customer growth means that storage requirements could increase quickly in a short period of time. UniquE wanted a solution that could keep pace with their growth without breaking the bank.

3PAR was the only system that could deliver on this requirement. With other systems, a completely new cabinet would have to be purchased for every upgrade.

*Adding a new client to our system used to require a lot of time and effort. Now with 3PAR I don't even worry about the storage component.*

—Ben Mullis, Vice President of IT, UniquE Solutions

### **EASY TO USE AND DEPLOY**

UniquE Solutions was worried about excessive administration time and effort—a significant threat to profitability. 3PAR's ease of management eliminated these concerns by allowing the company to add new customers quickly without affecting availability for other customers, thus reducing time-to-revenue. With 3PAR, UniquE can add capacity, host connectivity and performance online—quickly and simply—so that IT staff can better spend its time addressing customer needs.

*Creating a LUN is so easy with 3PAR; it only took a couple commands. Growing a LUN is also very simple. With EMC, it would take days of training before I would feel comfortable.*

—Tim Rich Jr., Network Administrator, UniquE Solutions

*This was the first SAN equipment that I was personally involved with, and by going with 3PAR I didn't have to become a storage expert.*

—Tim Rich Jr., Network Administrator, UniquE Solutions

### **IMPROVED PERFORMANCE**

Performance is a critical aspect of UniquE's business and they had to ensure that 3PAR could handle the increased load as their customer base grew. They had to find a solution that could scale easily and affordably without performance degradation to applications that are dependant on a SQL Server database.

The 3PAR InServ Storage Server delivered the goods. UniquE found that they could easily increase performance of the system by simply adding nodes to the same InServ they already purchased, online, without taking up more floor space in the datacenter. Once the 3PAR InServ was deployed, UniquE actually improved service levels for existing customers, especially during peak hours. True validation for the IT group at UniquE came when the 3PAR InServ achieved a 30 to 40% improvement in database performance after installation.

*We had a 30-40% database performance improvement right out of the box! It was amazing. We set up the 3PAR InServ using defaults and spent no time planning or tuning the system and it just worked faster.*

—Tim Rich Jr., Network Administrator, UniquE Solutions

*Before 3PAR, my storage administrator spent 70% of his time managing our storage—now ongoing administration only takes 5% of his time. We initially considered going with a midrange array from a brand leader, but chose 3PAR for better scalability, ease-of-use and speed. With 3PAR, we saved money immediately and were able to delay a \$60K redundant switch purchase.*

Ben Mullis  
Vice President of IT  
UniquE Solutions

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Contact us to learn more about 3PAR products and services:

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