



CASE STUDY

eMoney Advisor Takes Client Experience to New Heights

100%
Availability delivered

FASTER
Refresh of development environments in minutes not hours or days

ZERO
Impact from upgrades and capacity additions

“ I can’t imagine things without Pure Storage, because it has been so important to us.”

MICHAEL FINNEGAN
VICE PRESIDENT OF PRODUCTION OPERATIONS

eMoney Advisor, with the help of Pure Storage, accelerated the delivery of new features and services to clients, while sharply reducing resources devoted to storage management. In addition to improving customer experience, adding Pure Storage radically changed the work life of eMoney’s IT staff for the better.

Supporting a Growing Client Base With Ever-Changing Needs

During his career in IT, Michael Finnegan has learned that standing still can be the same as falling behind, and it's a lesson he applies often in his job as Vice President of Production Operations at eMoney Advisor. "If I look back five years ago at what was state-of-the-art then, it pales in comparison to today's standards," Finnegan observes. "While 99.5% uptime might have been great then, our business today expects 100%."

eMoney Advisor is a cloud-based software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform that combines financial planning software, data aggregation, business analytics and other functions to help financial professionals build stronger client relationships, streamline business operations and drive revenue growth.

eMoney was founded in 2000 and acquired by Fidelity Investments in 2015. Since the acquisition, eMoney has nearly doubled in size, and its more than 600 employees work hard to support a growing client-base with ever-changing needs. Currently, more than 50,000 financial professionals representing firms and enterprises of all sizes use eMoney's solutions to serve 2.1 million end-clients across the country. In addition, eMoney aggregates nearly \$2 trillion in end-client assets.

As a SaaS provider, "the quality of the customer experience is paramount," Finnegan says. "We stress operational excellence in all we do, so that our clients—and in turn their clients—have the best possible experience."

To deliver on that promise, Finnegan invests strategically in technology, products and services to make his IT environment as powerful and efficient as possible. A key element in this ongoing process is Pure Storage, which now is the storage standard for eMoney's infrastructure. Finnegan does not waver when he describes the impact it has had. "Everything has gotten better. I can't imagine things without Pure, because it has been so important to us."

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Advancing Service Levels

The performance of eMoney's backend databases is critical to delivering an excellent customer experience. And Pure Storage improved that performance to the point that clients have noticed, Finnegan reports. "Storage bottlenecks are non-existent, and we have seen performance improvements and higher reliability across the board."

Part of the noticeable improvement is in the speed of accessing data and applications, and part is the improved reliability and availability of access. "The stability, reliability and performance of Pure Storage arrays means we can raise our standards and deliver on our promises—even to the point of delivering 100% availability," Finnegan says.



Contributing to ultra-high availability is the non-disruptive nature of software upgrades and capacity additions to Pure Storage arrays. “We have gone through three generations of Pure FlashArray arrays—starting with the 400 series, then the //M and now the //X—along with at least 10 firmware updates,” says Finnegan. “They’ve all been seamless and behind the scenes. No one has ever noticed an impact.”

In 2017, Finnegan and his team noticed the trend of their backup and restore tests increasing due to expected data growth. A database backup/restore test of critical databases was determined not to be up to Finnegan’s standards. Finnegan wanted to know what could be done to ensure rapid recovery in the event of a significant issue.

Finnegan and his Pure Storage account team came up with a plan: bring in a FlashBlade system to handle mission-critical Microsoft® SQL Server® backups in combination with Cohesity software and Pure snapshot technology, which would provide multiple options for rapid restore/recovery. Now, database restore times are well within the window needed to meet SLAs and provide rapid recovery of critical systems and databases.

Accelerating Time to Revenue

Adding new features and functionality is essential for a SaaS provider to retain current customers and attract new ones, and Finnegan credits Pure Storage with enabling a quantum improvement in how eMoney is able to add new services. “Historically, one of the biggest barriers to accelerating software development has been the time it takes to spin up databases so developers can test new ideas,” Finnegan notes. “With Pure’s snapshotting capabilities and high rates of data reduction, we can deliver new environments in minutes, not hours or days. Our DBAs can refresh databases quickly and easily, just with a click.”

This capability has a direct impact on cutting time to market for new features. “We used to release new features only once a quarter,” Finnegan notes. “Now, we can release features and services whenever we want.”

Finnegan says he is driving to automate IT processes at every opportunity, and credits Pure Storage with helping in that effort. “We leverage Pure SDKs and plug-ins in many ways to improve automation and scripting and to deliver environments to developers who cannot afford to wait around,” he says. “The integration with VMware is especially impressive.”

Moving to richer and more timely analytics is another major source of revenue acceleration for SaaS providers like eMoney. Leveraging the same FlashBlade originally purchased for SQL backups, Finnegan’s team can leverage the FlashBlade to further enable development teams on key initiatives around containers, microservices, and machine learning to gain better business insights and capitalize on the data eMoney consumes. “With its speed, flexibility and scalability, we see a lot more that we could be putting on FlashBlade,” Finnegan observes.

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In addition to improving the customer experience, adding Pure Storage radically changed the work life of eMoney's IT staff for the better. "We used to have EMC VNX arrays, and they were very complicated to manage and required dedicated storage admins," says Finnegan. "In contrast, anyone on the team can manage Pure Storage. The interface is simple and intuitive, and the array requires almost no attention. And with the proactive support that Pure delivers, even if there were an issue that needed attention, Pure will deal with it—most times before you even know the issue existed."

With storage requiring virtually no attention, the IT staff has been able to turn its attention to higher-value activities, making yet another contribution to enhancing the customer experience and delivering new features faster.

"Pure Storage has been a game-changer for our organization and has delivered on everything we need it to do," Finnegan says.

“ Having a partner like Pure Storage—who's innovative and keeps a strategic focus—puts eMoney in a position to take advantage of the opportunities in front of us.”

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