FOUR SMART STORAGE STRATEGIES TO COMPETE IN TODAY'S DIGITAL WORLD

52% of IT decision makers indicated plans to invest in upgrades and maintenance of storage solutions in the next two years.[1]

There's no doubt about it. Digital transformation is proving its worth in this new era of perpetual IT challenges. Whether it is a global pandemic, staffing shortages, supply chain issues, rotating consumer purchasing patterns, or the pressure to trim costs in an inflationary environment, companies must have the agility to adapt to the new realities foisted upon them. In fact, competition and new market paradigms were each considered a top driver of digital transformation by 29% of survey respondents in our recent study.[2]

The next set of post-pandemic challenges will change from the ones currently at hand. The shifting landscape of the business environment is requiring companies to regroup, reassess, and rapidly retool current processes, systems, apps, and IT infrastructures. And the goal of all this accelerated effort is to ensure that businesses can pivot more effectively to meet the increasing virtual needs of customers and employees.

Unfortunately, this effort also places further strain on current IT budgets and staff. IT staffers, who already wear enough hats to fill a walk-in closet, have found themselves stretched to support their company's hyper-accelerated push toward both IT modernization and the rapid development of new applications. This strain comes at a time where the bar for application quality and performance has never been higher. No longer is it good enough for your applications to work only moderately well most of the time. Cloud-based apps that work well all the time have become the new standard, making expectations higher than ever. In summary:

- Customers expect the same experience from your company's apps and systems that they are getting from cloud-native apps.

- Remote workers expect to be highly productive with your systems—regardless of the worker's location or the device they use.

These time-sensitive and app-driven goals may lead you to wonder how your company's use of its underlying data storage can make much difference at all. How can it help IT teams work smarter, for example? Or how can efficient storage use make your company more successful? Surprisingly enough, how you use your enterprise storage can make quite a bit of difference. It can even serve as a competitive advantage previously unknown to you.

As the title of this executive brief eludes to, we have identified four smart storage strategies to help your company compete in today's digital world. Such strategies have already proven to help companies be better prepared for their new normal.

WEI

FOUR WAYS TO BE SMARTER ABOUT STORAGE

At WEI, customers often ask us what we think about emerging technologies. They come to us for guidance to solve difficult business and technical challenges while keeping business objectives at top of mind. These same customers have also realized that the conventional on-prem datacenter lacks the required agility of the modern cloud experience to survive in today's evolving business climates. In fact, a 2022 survey showed that 91% of IT organizations agree that achieving a mature cloud operations model on-prem is the single most important step they can make to eliminate IT complexity.[3]

One such solution starts with HPE GreenLake. The edge-to-cloud provider delivers workload-optimized infrastructure services for on-prem environments. Their Consume-as-a-Service model is giving companies greater agility to scale up or down and self-provision storage when needed. The HPE GreenLake for Block Storage solution can guarantee 100% availability for mission critical apps and provide greater financial and operational flexibility.

Meanwhile, customers also want to leverage "intelligent" storage systems and learn the real story behind industry buzz words such as machine learning (ML), artificial intelligence (AI), and predictive analytics. The question now shifts to asking how these software-based components within "intelligent" storage can make a difference to a customer's new needs to build better apps, hyper-modernize infrastructure, and remain competitive.

To help answer such questions, we have identified four examples of "old-vs-new" IT strategies. For the old, we look at legacy IT approaches that no longer work efficiently in today's digital environments. For the new, we offer a few smarter storage game-changers that have begun to make a positive difference in the companies who use them.

STRATEGY #1

Reduce support time, user frustration, and time-to-repair IT issues.

Old Strategy: On the legacy side of doing things, users who experienced an issue with one or more of a company's applications or systems may endure various tiers of support, manual elevations, and routing to different, siloed IT experts before an issue could be resolved.

SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT: HPE INTELLIGENT DATA PLATFORM

Reimagine how data is delivered, managed, and analyzed—in the cloud, within the data center, and at the edge.

HPE's intelligent data platform is an AI-driven storage solution that prevents issues before they occur by learning and adjusting in real time. This platform was developed with hybrid infrastructure in mind, meaning your data is accessible and usable across all data center and cloud environments.

- **It uses AI and advanced analytics to manage infrastructure**

- **It cuts through hybrid cloud complexity**

- **It can be consumed as a service**

- **It helps you unleash innovation**

HPE's Intelligent Data Platform turns data challenges into business opportunities.

Hewlett Packard Enterprise

If application downtime was involved, both the downtime and the protracted follow-up support cycle could then lead to excess user frustration. In today's world, it doesn't take much for frustrated users to look elsewhere for their application needs.

New Strategy: Take advantage of real-time, intelligent storage reporting to know what's going on in both the storage layer and in higher-level stacks built upon it. Use this real-time data to automate, triage, and resolve most application or system issues — often before the user reaches out to support or is routed to Level 1 or 2 support. Then, set up your intelligent storage to automatically route any still-remaining issues to more informed, Level 3 experts.

STRATEGY #2

Predict, identify, and resolve trouble spots before they happen.

Old Strategy: In legacy environments, it is often difficult to predict when an issue will occur and what the issue will be. Sure, IT experts can monitor components and devices. Isolated storage systems might even tell you when they are close to capacity or when a disk is starting to exhibit troubling behavior. But issues get much harder to track if they occur somewhere up or down the various layers of apps, servers, VMs, network, or storage. In that case, it is difficult to guess or predict when something will happen, where it might occur, or how to resolve it in advance.

New Strategy: Use real-time, predictive analytics offered by an intelligent storage platform to automatically identify and resolve most issues before they are visible to users. These are analytics based on millions of global data points, sensors, and systems collected and analyzed each second from around the world. Using cloud-based machine learning across all levels of your software/hardware stacks— from apps down to storage. An intelligent storage platform

lets you quickly pinpoint and resolve current and future issues, even before users learn of them. Problem behaviors occurring across the infrastructure can also be quickly identified and translated into patterns with automated recommendations.

STRATEGY #3

Smart planning for future IT growth.

Old Strategy: The old way of capacity planning often involved an imprecise, manual, and highly fallible guess based on what an organization thinks their IT future will look like. The best that many organizations might do is to also plan for an extra cushion of storage for those outlier scenarios you can't predict. This leads to costly overbuying of storage just to offset potential capacity issues in future.

New Strategy: Use what-if simulations based on real-world data and app profiles to verify existing capacity and closely predict your organization's future needs for capacity, performance, and bandwidth. Companies are finding such simulations and capacity planning insights to be invaluable.

STRATEGY #4

Use smart storage to help your IT infrastructure work smarter.

Old Strategy: Remember those "many hats" your IT team wears? Your current environment is still likely constrained by tight IT budgets and the need for staff to juggle multiple, competing priorities. In the old world, IT staffers just had to do whatever it took to keep the lights on, resolve issues as they occurred, and work hard to minimize system or application downtime.

New Strategy: Use today's smart storage as a powerful virtual assistant to help your IT team predict, prevent, and resolve issues. Use global dashboards to see the status of

systems all up and down the stack—wherever the systems are in the world. Then, use this type of assistant to bring the most-pressing, potential issues to those who need to resolve them. This prevents small problems turning into extended downtime or a major crisis. Less downtime also means more time that your business can focus on boosting its revenue.

USE SMART TOOLS TO MAKE SMARTER CHOICES

This executive brief expands on the tangible ways that real companies have come to use scalable intelligent storage to achieve a very real impact on their operations and bottom line. Determining whether this type of solution fits the most pressing needs of your environment may be another story, however. That's why there are several intelligent storage solutions worth exploring in this landscape.

TALK TO WEI TODAY

WEI's storage and infrastructure experts are best positioned to offer insights and considerations as you determine your needs. If you have questions about this type of storage or any other enterprise technologies then start a discussion with WEI today.

Sources
1. Foundry (IDG) Research commissioned by WEI, Dec 2020
2. Foundry (IDG) Research commissioned by WEI, Jan 2022
3. HPE GreenLake for Storage | HPE

ABOUT WEI

WEI is an innovative, full service, customer centric IT solutions provider.

Why WEI? Because we care. *Because we go further.*

At WEI, we're passionate about solving your technology problems and helping you drive your desired business outcomes. We believe in challenging the status quo and thinking differently. There are a lot of companies that can take today's technology and create a great IT solution for you. But we do more. We go further. And we have the customer, vendor and industry awards to prove it. WEI is a premier technology partner, who always puts our customers first while providing the most innovative solutions for over 30 years.