



Business challenge

Fashions come and go—and retailers must stay ahead of the curve. Retail giant Beall's, Inc. wanted to improve its ability to move rapidly on opportunities by accelerating its data analytics.

Transformation

Beall's, Inc. boosted its competitive edge by implementing IBM® Storage solutions, enabling faster data-driven insights to deliver agile retail experiences tailored to customers' evolving preferences.

Business benefits:

50%

shorter batch processing times ensures reports are available earlier in the day

Powers

faster, better decision-making that contributes to higher sales

>12,000

users supported by storage across several business-critical operational areas

Beall's, Inc. Getting the latest fashions into customers' hands sooner by accelerating access to data

Beall's Inc. is a privately held company, rich in tradition, still owned by the founding family. Established in 1915, Beall's has grown to over 530 stores across the Sunbelt with online destinations at Beallsflorida.com, burkesoutlet.com and bunulu.com. Beall's is the preferred choice for those seeking to live the Florida lifestyle.

"Our success relies on speed to market, and IBM Storage solutions play a key part in helping us achieve stellar results."

Rick Dreiling

Vice President of Infrastructure and Corporate Systems
Beall's Inc.

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Tuning in to customer demand

Apparel and home fashions are notoriously fickle—trends emerge and disappear, which is half the fun for buyers seeking a fresh new look. For many retailers, the challenge is bringing novel styles to customers quickly, without compromising on quality or affordable prices.

Known as ‘the Florida Store’, Beall’s, Inc. has built up a loyal following in the Sunshine State by keeping track of what its customers want and providing it at the right price. To achieve this, the company needs to understand demand and take advantage of purchasing opportunities ahead of its competitors.

Rick Dreiling, Vice President of Infrastructure and Corporate Systems at Beall’s, Inc., picks up the story: “In our business, it’s essential that we have the right information to hand to make the best deals with vendors. The sooner in the day we know what’s selling well, the faster we can go out looking for more and get extra stock into our stores to meet demand.”



Eager to continue improving customer experiences, Beall’s, Inc. began investigating how to speed up access to sales insights. The company’s IT team realized that its storage infrastructure was acting as a bottleneck on its data warehouse and analytics systems.

“Before, we had silos of storage, which restricted overall performance,” says Dreiling. “We set ourselves a target of reducing overnight batch processing windows, to minimize the impact on the reports that we run at the start of every day.”

Buying into super-fast storage

Beall’s, Inc. gained the horsepower it needed to power faster reporting and analytics, consolidating to IBM Storage solutions. First, the company deployed two [IBM XIV®](#) storage systems. Once these systems were fully utilized, Beall’s, Inc. added [IBM Storwize® V7000](#) devices and, most recently, [IBM FlashSystem® V9000](#) solutions.



The company took advantage of leasing options from [IBM Global Financing](#) to reduce the effect of the technology purchases on its bottom line.

“From the start of our journey with IBM Storage technology, we’ve seen performance continue to increase with every new device,” explains Dreiling.

“Over the years, we’ve built a great relationship with IBM. They’ve been our storage vendor of choice during big infrastructure changes, such as our data center migration a few years ago. Working with IBM Global Financing allowed us to spread the cost of the storage solutions, making them much more financially viable.”

Today, Beall’s, Inc. has IBM Storage systems deployed at co-located data centers in Tampa, Florida, and Atlanta, Georgia. The environment supports business-critical functions such as analytics, merchandising and warehouse management, and more than 12,000 users. Both IBM Storwize V7000 and IBM FlashSystem V9000 solutions feature [IBM Spectrum Virtualize™](#) software, which helped the company simplify storage management.

“Taking a software-defined approach to storage with Spectrum Virtualize eliminates silos, so we can use resources to their full potential,” comments Dreiling. “It’s also smoothed our transition to a hybrid cloud model. We’re adopting SaaS [software-as-a-service] versions of key applications where they are available and it makes sense, and Spectrum Virtualize makes it easier to move data.”

Rising above the crowd

By deploying IBM FlashSystem solutions, Beall’s, Inc. succeeded in driving response times down further, helping the business to seize the advantage over its retail rivals.

“We had high expectations for IBM flash technology, anticipating that it would help us reduce our batch processing times by 25 percent,” remarks Dreiling. “In fact, the results were twice as good—IBM FlashSystem V9000 cut our overnight batch windows in half. The impact was so dramatic that we assumed our internal processes couldn’t be working correctly. They were, FlashSystem is just that fast!”

More efficient batch processing transforms Beall's, Inc.'s business processes, allowing the company to put the information that decision-makers need at their fingertips much sooner. Specifically, the company can mine sales data to build a better picture of customer demand, and make better purchasing choices.

"Our success relies on speed to market, and IBM Storage solutions play a key part in helping us achieve stellar results," says Dreiling. "With FlashSystem V9000, we have doubled our transactional throughput, allowing us to get key reports into managers' hands quicker than ever before, so they can use accurate data to guide the company to higher sales and revenues."

Beall's, Inc. can now react to changes in the marketplace with greater speed and agility, launching new initiatives to gain an important edge over its competitors. For example, the company's merchants can now see selling trends earlier, and make smarter, better informed buying decisions because they can access relevant data faster than ever before.

Dreiling concludes: "Backed by IBM Storage, we can deliver customer experiences that improve over time, making sure they continue to choose us rather than competition. We're changing the way that we process data so we can understand our customers better, so we can serve them better."

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Rick Dreiling, Vice President of Infrastructure and Corporate Systems, Beall's Inc.

Solution components

- IBM® FlashSystem® V9000
- IBM Global Financing
- IBM Storwize® V7000
- IBM XIV® Storage System

Take the next step

To learn more about IBM FlashSystem solutions please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/storage/flash

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