



### Business challenge

With existing systems nearing the end of their support cycle, Ceramfix wanted to update its storage architecture.

### Transformation

Hampered by a slow, aging storage architecture, Ceramfix joined with IBM Business Partner Asset IT to migrate its operations to a resilient platform backed by IBM technology. Now, the business can continue its cross-site back-office operations without interruption—even when an errant truck knocks out its fiber connections.

### Results

**~80% drop**

in data processing timelines related to month-end invoicing

**Increased reliability**

with cross-site replication and automated failover

**75% faster**

backup times compared to previous methods

# Ceramfix

## Resilient storage that can survive outages ... or out-of-control trucks

Headquartered in Gaspar, Brazil, [Ceramfix](#) (external link) is a manufacturer of products focused on the installation of ceramic tiles—such as grout, mortar, adhesives, waterproofing treatments. The business was founded in 1993 and currently operates from nine locations in Brazil and one office in Paraguay.

*“HyperSwap worked just like you’d want it to. We kept our processes running even though our fiber line was lying in the street.”*

—Daivid Thomaz, Technology Manager, Ceramfix



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## No time to waste

Delays can wreak havoc on the budget of any business. Without the necessary cash in hand, operations quickly grind to a halt. And to keep those revenues flowing, companies need reliable, efficient billing processes. So when manufacturer Ceramfix started experiencing delays in its month-end invoice processing, the business realized that it needed to act quickly.

“We had customers and employees complaining,” recalls Daivid Thomaz, board-reporting Technology Manager at Ceramfix. “In the last week of the month, we processed and sent our invoices, but there was a frequent slowdown. Raising the relevant data required a lot of time and effort, so it was stressful every month. We were always concerned about whether or not we would have our invoices sent on time, and the IT department was receiving constant tickets about slow processes.”

At issue was the company’s aging storage infrastructure, which Ceramfix had deployed five years earlier. As the equipment neared the end of its support window, the business was frequently experiencing latency issues like those affecting its invoicing efforts. At the same time, the older technology lacked the scalability that Ceramfix needed to support its recent growth.

“We were adding new customers, new business units, new products,” explains Thomaz. “We also needed to meet our strategy - we wanted to bring our production sites closer to our customers to better support manufacturing and meet our demand. Therefore, we built four new business units, each creating new production and billing data flows.”

The business began looking at new storage alternatives, particularly those that offered a high level of availability since effective invoicing and overall data management were critical to Ceramfix’s ongoing growth and success.

“We were also working with a limited budget,” notes Thomaz. “We needed a solution that offered high availability, but we didn’t want to dedicate the funds needed to implement a full SAN environment. We needed something that could directly connect with the fiber we already had running between our two data centers.”

## A hands-on experience

After discussing viable options with IBM Business Partner Asset IT, Ceramfix began considering new IBM storage technology. These discussions led staff from the two businesses to access the resources of the IBM Client Center in Montpellier, France to vet and

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evaluate potential options including IBM FlashSystem® and IBM® HyperSwap® technology.

“The Montpellier site was very important in our decision to go with IBM,” recalls Thomaz. “We could see the behavior of the architecture in the moment of a crash and the following failover. That gave us a lot of trust in the solution.”

Claiton Zanella, Executive at Asset IT, adds: “It’s very difficult to demonstrate the value of a technology like HyperSwap to our clients—to build the necessary environment. I don’t have room in my lab for something like that. But the Montpellier lab let us demonstrate how the storage will act in the field.”

After the successful demonstrations, the Asset IT team worked with Ceramfix to deploy a new IBM FlashSystem 5030 (formerly IBM Storewize®) device in each of the client’s data centers, located roughly

1 km apart. The all-flash device uses internet small computer system interface (iSCSI) protocols to connect to the existing fiber network. And thanks to IBM HyperSwap technology, the new storage equipment operates as a single cluster, boasting automated failover capabilities in the event of a disruption or outage.

At the same time, Asset IT helped Ceramfix update its long-term backup and recovery processes, deploying a new IBM TS4300 Tape Library.

## Crash-proof storage—literally

With its new storage systems in place, Ceramfix now has a much more resilient architecture—a fact that has already been demonstrated in an unexpected way.

“A truck—a tractor trailer—crashed into a utility pole outside one of our offices,” recounts Thomaz. “The insurer had to be called. We were outside taking pictures to demonstrate what happened. It was a mess. But HyperSwap worked exactly as you would like. We kept our processes running, even though our fiber line was on the ground. Since then, I can relax knowing that we have a reliable, comprehensive and highly available solution.”

Beyond its ability to survive truck crashes, the new architecture also yields a number of performance improvements, particularly in the firm's invoicing efforts. Now, Ceramfix can complete the data processing for its month-end invoicing in roughly 20% of the time. Similarly, the calculation time for monthly payroll, which previously required around four hours depending on volume, dropped to only 30 minutes thanks to the faster all-flash storage.

Further, backup timelines have also been narrowed thanks to the IBM tape storage. On average, Ceramfix can complete a backup of its environment in a quarter of the time that it previously required.

"Their storage management is much easier as well," adds Zanella. "If there is an issue, the IBM storage solution will open a ticket on its own, so they can react more quickly. And if they need additional support resolving the challenge, we can step in to help."

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—Daivid Thomaz, Technology Manager, Ceramfix

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Finally, Ceramfix was pleased with its choice of Asset IT to aid with the solution. Or as Thomaz explains it: "They were a real partner, helping me from the purchase decision to the moment of implementation. Asset IT was very attentive to our needs and their thorough management of the project made me very comfortable. By the end, I had no doubts that we made the right call."

## Solution component

- IBM® FlashSystem® 5030
- IBM TS4300 Tape Library

### Take the next step

To learn more about the IBM solution featured in this story, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner.

To learn more about its IT services and what Asset IT can do for you, please visit: [Asset IT](#) (external link).

### About Asset IT

Boasting a rich, seven-year history, IBM Business Partner [Asset IT](#) (external link) is a provider of IT solutions and services, specializing in architecting hybrid multiclouds, data migrations and business continuity solutions. The business is currently headquartered in Curitiba, Brazil.

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