



Business challenge

As massive data growth piled pressure on Unique's IT systems, sluggish performance threatened the company's ability to process vital payroll information for clients on time.

Transformation

By upgrading to powerful, ultra-efficient IBM® Storwize® V7000 solutions, Unique accelerated key processes, including payroll runs, by up to 40 percent and gained headroom for growth.

Business benefits

30-40%

performance boost translates into faster payroll runs for clients

Frees

staff to focus on enhancing business applications, adding value for clients

Boosts

competitiveness by helping Unique run faster than rivals

Unique Software Industries Ltd.

Delivering responsive, reliable payroll services for clients

Founded in 1989 and based in Jerusalem, Israel, [Unique Software Industries Ltd.](#) specializes in payroll software and services. Unique's software supports payroll processing in a large variety of sectors, including government, construction, financial services, hospitality, high tech, manufacturing and more.

"IBM solutions help us run reports faster and more efficiently, so we can deliver the consistently excellent service that customers demand."

—Eli Itshaki, Vice President of Infrastructure Systems, Unique Software Industries Ltd.

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Growing pains

Unique counts some of Israel's largest organizations among its customers—including the Ministry of Education, and defense technology firm Rafael. Its clients demand rapid, reliable service, and if Unique fails to deliver on these expectations, it risks damaging customer satisfaction and losing out on lucrative business.

Eli Itshaki, Vice President of Infrastructure Systems at Unique, takes up the story: “Our customers count on us to ensure that their employees are paid correctly and on time. Currently, we process salary information for hundreds of thousands of people every month.”

Unique delivers its solutions on a fully managed, Software-as-a-Service [SaaS] basis for the majority of its customers. The company also offers on-premises services for customers who require this option, and prefer it to the SaaS model.

With many clients relying on its SaaS offerings, it is essential for the company to guarantee the highest levels of availability and performance for the infrastructure underpinning this environment.

As growing storage requirements pushed Unique's existing EMC storage systems to their limits, the company needed to find an alternative—and fast.

Itshaki continues: “We were quickly approaching full capacity on our EMC platform, and it simply wasn't delivering the performance we demanded, particularly for large Microsoft SQL server workloads. For instance, it was taking longer and longer to complete the monthly payroll run for our largest client—a delay that we could not afford any longer.

“We wanted to upgrade to a solution that could deliver strong performance for even our most demanding workloads, and the scalability to support ongoing growth—all at a cost-effective price point.”

Finding the right fit

In search of a solution, Unique turned to Emet-Barmor, its longtime service provider and an IBM Premier Business Partner, which recommended a platform built on virtualized IBM Storwize V7000 storage solution.

Itshaki explains: “We have been working with Emet-Barmor for many years, and we know that we can count on them for expert advice and support. The team worked very hard to understand our requirements and guide us through the selection process.

“We compared a range of offerings and, after extensive testing, IBM Storwize emerged as the best option for our needs—it ticked all the boxes in terms of functionality, performance, ease-of-use, capacity and price.”

Working with Emet-Barmor, Unique completed the migration to the new Storwize platform in just one week.

Itshaki states: “We had a tight implementation timeline, as we wanted the new system to be up and running before our next monthly payroll run. With Storwize, the entire process went incredibly smoothly—we were very impressed by how quick and easy it was to install the system and migrate our data.”

Today, Unique uses a single Storwize V7000 system to support tens of terabytes of production data, which is stored on a combination of flash drives and hard disk drives (HDDs). The company uses IBM Easy Tier® feature, which automatically identifies highly active data and moves it to the faster flash storage, to optimize performance.

Unique has deployed an identical Storwize system at its disaster recovery (DR) site. The company creates near-instant copies of its production data with IBM FlashCopy®, and uses Veeam Backup and Remote Copy technologies to replicate the backup data to its DR environment. This helps Unique to ensure that mission-critical data is available around the clock, no matter what.

Backups of client data are stored on an IBM TS3100 Tape Library, which provides reliable, high-performance long-term storage. Itshaki notes: “We have been using IBM tape storage solutions for many years, and have been very impressed by their reliability and capacity. The TS3100 provides us with an effective, cost-efficient way to ensure that client data is safely backed up and archived.”

Supercharging performance and efficiency

By taking advantage of IBM Real-time Compression™, Unique has increased utilization of storage resources, gaining headroom to accommodate future data growth.

Itshaki comments: “We had almost maxed out the capacity of our old storage platform; with IBM Storwize we have the same amount of physical disk space, but are only utilizing 60 percent of the system’s total capacity thanks to Real-time Compression. Improving storage efficiency in this way allows us to stay on top of growing business volumes, and gives us a strong foundation for future expansion.”

Equally importantly, Unique has gained a vital boost to performance that is helping the company complete key processes, including payroll runs, in a much timelier manner.

“Since introducing IBM Storwize, we have reported performance gains of 30 to 40 percent for certain processes,” notes Itshaki. “In fact, we have accelerated the runtime for our largest client’s monthly payroll run by more than 33 percent.”

The performance enhancements have unlocked greater productivity for Unique’s employees, as Itshaki explains: “Our teams are no longer held back by time-consuming data processing tasks, so they have more time to focus on the important things.

This includes software development and testing work that is helping us to add new functionalities to our payroll solutions and improve the user experience. As a result, we can provide more compelling offerings to clients, helping us win and retain their business.”

He concludes: “IBM solutions definitely provide us with a competitive advantage—they help us run reports faster and more efficiently, so we can deliver the responsive, consistently excellent service that customers demand. And as our business continues to grow, we feel confident that we have the solid foundation we need to reach new heights of success.”

Solution components

- IBM® Easy Tier®
- IBM Real-time Compression™
- IBM Storwize® V7000
- IBM TS3100 Tape Library

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Take the next step

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

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