



SUCCESS STORIES

B. BRAUN MÉDICAL OPTS FOR NETWORK APPLIANCE™ UNIFIED SAN AND NAS STORAGE SOLUTION

“When I compare the technological sophistication of Network Appliance storage solutions—especially its unified SAN and NAS systems—to other offerings on the market, I can only believe in the success and the future of this company.”

FRANCK VILLARS Network and Systems Manager, B. Braun Médical

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KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Location France

Industry Medical

The Challenge

Provide accessible storage for software data (NAS), Lotus Notes messaging data (SAN), and SAP production data (SAN) running on any Windows® platform (CIFS), while ensuring data permanence

The Solution

- NetApp unified SAN/NAS storage
- Clustered NetApp FAS960 systems
- NetApp Snapshot™ functionality

Benefits

- High availability
- Investment protection
- Simplified management

THE CUSTOMER

For the past 160 years, B. Braun (www.bbraun.com) has specialised in the design, production, and marketing of products and services for the worldwide healthcare industry. With more than 70,000 customers and a 2002 profit of €219 million, B. Braun is the fourth-largest medical equipment supplier in the world, and its French subsidiary, B. Braun Médical, is the leading supplier in France. B. Braun's diverse product line includes infusion apparatus, reanimation equipment, surgical instruments, spinal implants, and nutrition and diabetes products.

THE CHALLENGE:

Centralise and Consolidate SAP and Lotus Data Storage

After successfully leveraging the advantages of NetApp network-attached storage (NAS) for several years, B. Braun Médical decided to expand its infrastructure as part of an enterprise IT redeployment. The company wanted to migrate mission-critical SAP applications and Lotus Notes messaging data from direct-attached storage to a centralised storage area network (SAN) infrastructure, thereby enabling it to ensure business continuity and outstanding availability.

B. Braun Médical took a rigorous approach to selecting a storage infrastructure partner. Franck Villars, network and systems

manager for B. Braun, explains, “All of our data—whether it is associated with Lotus Notes messaging or SAP software—is of strategic value. Given that our most business-critical data would be stored and protected by the new storage infrastructure, we took every possible precaution over the course of a two-and-a-half-year evaluation process. We studied bids from seven vendors, using as a key criterion each solution's support for standards such as SCSI, iSCSI, Fibre Channel, and CIFS.

“Because we operate in a full Windows 2000 environment, it was crucial to evaluate each system's performance using CIFS rather than UNIX® software,” continues Villars. “We needed a storage solution capable of supporting all our applications, including those currently stored on CIFS NAS storage. This requirement was beyond the capabilities of standard SAN solutions, which store only block-level data. Additionally, since our SAP applications run on the largest Oracle® Database on Windows in Europe, we needed to ensure that our storage vendor was capable of meeting Oracle Database storage requirements. Around the time that we narrowed our focus to two suppliers and began real-world testing, Network Appliance approached us with its newly launched unified SAN and NAS storage solutions.”

“We have never seen an equivalent solution that provides this level of performance and security.”

CHRISTOPHE OLIVIER SAP Administrator, B. Braun Médical

THE SOLUTION:

High-Performance NetApp Unified SAN and NAS Storage Infrastructure Leverages Existing Expertise

Christophe Sainte-Livrade, network and systems engineer with B. Braun Médical, describes the process for evaluating the NetApp solution. “NetApp invited us to measure the performance of its infrastructure at several existing client sites. What we saw interested us, and then everything happened quickly. To complete the same tests in our network environment, NetApp supplied a storage system, installed it in our offices, and dispatched a European SAP expert for a detailed study of our configuration. The NetApp system was operational in half a day, which impressed our team quite a bit, and by the end of the week NetApp had caught up with the vendors we had been working with for months.”

Christophe Olivier, SAP administrator for B. Braun Médical, adds, “What was really significant was the way NetApp approached the process. The team absorbed itself fully in our specifications, assimilating them and sometimes even anticipating our questions. At the conclusion, we received a perfectly clear and precise 17-page technical report that committed to providing specific assistance managing our SAP/Oracle migration, including access to SAP experts from the NetApp Competency Centre.”

After six months of thorough evaluation, B. Braun Médical deployed a unified storage solution from Network Appliance to support its mission-critical data centre applications. The solution is configured with a clustered FAS960 enterprise storage system, which provides centralised SAN storage for Lotus Notes, SAP applications running on an Oracle Database, and the company’s IP telephony-based phone system. The NetApp FAS960 system also provides rapidly accessible NAS storage for home directories and multiple software applications.

“Of course, the performance, reliability, and simplicity of the NetApp solution were undeniable,” explains Villars. “NetApp even customised our training on the equipment, taking into account our ‘historical’ experience with the NetApp Data ONTAP® operating system and NetApp NAS storage. It took only a day for our team to come up to speed on the new unified storage systems. At each stage of this process, we appreciated the intellectual honesty of our NetApp contacts, their capacity to listen, their strength of engagement, and the clarity of the roadmap. The NetApp SAP consultant even showed us how to optimise our SAP applications!”

BUSINESS BENEFITS:

Reliable and Evolutionary Unified Storage System Adds Value Company-Wide

The clustered configuration of the NetApp FAS system fulfills the business continuity requirements specified by B. Braun Médical and helps ensure outstanding availability of the company’s strategic data. “We do not have to worry about the NetApp FAS960,” explains Sainte-Livrade. “The equipment needs no dedicated personnel and is distinguished by its simplicity. We also have investment protection, as NetApp designed its solution entirely based on the notion of protocol. We have a guarantee that our storage network can evolve with the industry because our solution supports a broad range of protocols, including CIFS, SCSI, iSCSI, FC, HTTP, etc.”

“Network Appliance has committed to a quality of service level that includes 24x7 nonstop support,” says Sainte-Livrade. “If I come down with a problem at three o’clock in the morning, I don’t just want an engineer, I want an answer! NetApp does exactly that.”

“We have never seen an equivalent solution that provides this level of performance and security,” states Olivier. “We would never have implemented the alternative solutions offered by the other vendors.”

In the case of a version upgrade, NetApp Snapshot functionality provides a guarantee that I can restore a previous version in 10 seconds. This level of immediacy and security satisfies our users, who know they can, at any moment, get back complete system files.”

The importance of B. Braun Médical’s unified storage system is expected to grow as the company’s storage capacity increases. Villars already takes into account this aspect in his future planning. “We need to implement a robust data protection plan enabling us to benefit

from having an operational copy of our volumes. We need the capability to mirror data to a remote site as part of a disaster recovery solution that could be activated at any moment in case of an incident. All these elements exist with Network Appliance solutions, and we plan to carefully evaluate them. We may also consider a near-line storage solution such as the NetApp NearStore® system.

“Our ability to leverage the successive-building-block approach of Network Appliance will provide considerable benefits,” concludes Villars. “Regardless of how the challenges change as B. Braun and the industry evolve, we are confident that Network Appliance will have a solution.”

ABOUT NETWORK APPLIANCE

Network Appliance is a world leader in unified storage solutions for today’s data-intensive enterprise. Since its inception in 1992, Network Appliance has delivered technology, product, and partner firsts that simplify data management. Information about Network Appliance™ solutions and services is available at www.netapp.com.

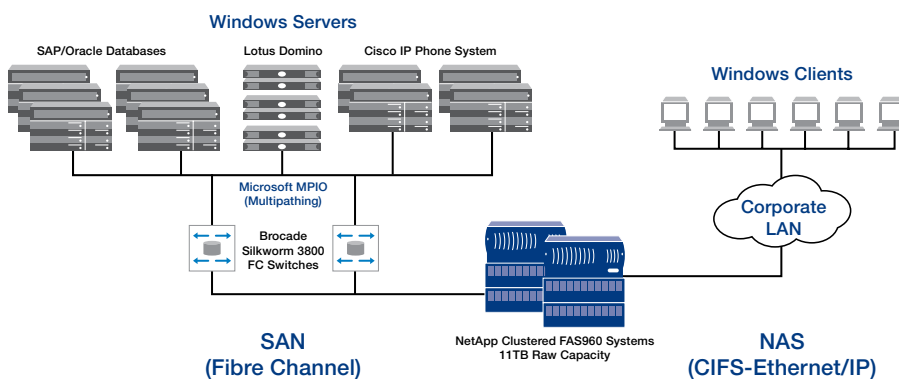


Figure 1) NetApp unified storage at B. Braun.



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