

AWARD-WINNING ASSURESTOR ACCELERATES CLOUD DR AND BACKUP WITH ULTRA-FLEXIBLE ZADARA zSTORAGE

True as-a-service delivery, 24/7 support and flexible scaling has readied AssureStor for growth without risk.

For AssureStor, an award-winning UK-based cloud backup and disaster recovery (DR) provider, data storage is at the core of the business. AssureStor enables its channel partners to deliver backup and DR services to their end customers, leveraging the popular Asigra, CloudAlly, Zerto, and Veeam backup software platforms. Many of those partners make use of AssureStor's own data centers, which store petabytes of critical data belonging to organizations of all kinds. AssureStor is also the world's only provider of aggregation services for Zerto, an HPE-owned data protection solution, offering a lower entry commitment for resellers and simplified administration for their partners.

To call AssureStor's choice of storage vendor critical would, then, be an understatement. From its inception in 2012, the company had employed a CapEx-based business model that required it to purchase storage hardware up front. With its team of skilled engineers, AssureStor handled management of its storage infrastructure in house. But as AssureStor grew and took on new partners, this led to challenges around storage performance and capacity needs. How could the company minimize the risk of investing in growth, while always being ready to meet the needs of its expanding partner base?

SOLUTION HIGHLIGHTS

- 100%-OpEx model eliminates up-front costs of business growth and new customer deals.
- Inclusive 24/7 Zadara support minimizes storage management overhead.
- Modern Zadara hardware reduces energy costs by ~30% compared to previous storage arrays.
- Flexible up-or-down scaling protects ROI against customer shrinkage.
- Technology can be refreshed when commercially viable, not on a fixed cycle.

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Jason Reid

Founder and Managing Director,
AssureStor Ltd

"Our key value has always been to give partners a zero-cost, zero-risk approach to adopting new cloud-based technologies," says Jason Reid, Founder and Managing Director, AssureStor Ltd. "We can protect any end-user environment. But we needed better performance; that's where we were seeing the most problems with our previous storage platform. As a CapEx-driven company, you also need to spend lots of money, but you see the revenue from that drip in over several years."

Zadara Edge Cloud Services offered AssureStor a proven route to transforming its storage platforms and its business model. Zadara zStorage provides fully managed storage as a service, with a 100%-OpEx model that minimizes the need for up-front investment or in-house storage management. Zadara customers can locate zStorage hardware on their own premises and have complete flexibility to scale capacity and performance up or down, instantly with on-site buffer capacity or within a few days for larger upgrades.

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AssureStor

"The OpEx model is what got us taking a serious look at Zadara," says Reid. "But in the 12 months we've worked with them, we've been impressed enough to go all in and say every single platform we provide will use zStorage. The big thing for me has been the resilience and performance, it's improved the service we pass down to our partners for all our backup platforms."

ADDRESSING BUSINESS RISK

A range of challenges, both technical and business-related, led AssureStor to consider Zadara as a partner who could help the company grow with confidence.

AssureStor was attracting new partners with its zero-risk offering. But the company was being **burdened with large up-front investments** to build the infrastructure needed to support those partners, as well as long lead times to deliver expansions.

"It's difficult for a growing business because you worry about big deals," recalls Reid. "You ask yourself, where do I get that next bit of investment to spend half a million on new storage to support the deal? So, Zadara's OpEx model was a huge hook for us."

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The company was also dealing with a **significant management overhead**.

"We were managing storage in house and the overhead was starting to be noticed," says Reid. "When you start to grow as a business, and you're responsible for several thousand terabytes of customer data, you start worrying. If something catastrophic happens, you need the right level of support."

TRUE FLEXIBILITY WITH zSTORAGE

zStorage met these challenges with a 100%-OpEx as-a-service model, SLA-driven support that is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year, plus truly flexible scaling that de-risks business growth and shrinkage. This has enabled AssureStor to not only onboard new customers more easily, but to meet sudden spikes in demand and solve technical issues without having to invest in additional hardware or skills.

"Zadara gives us the ability to expand on a whim, or double the performance of the array. And I can do that from the comfort of my office."

Jason Reid
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In the world of disaster recovery, storage requirements can increase temporarily when several end-customers need to restore their environments at the same time. Following a disaster, AssureStor aims to restore critical environments from backup in moments, by spinning up a new production environment in the company's own data center. The customer continues to use this cloud environment until their own systems are reinstated. With zStorage, AssureStor can increase the performance of its storage controllers during one of these spikes – and scale back down flexibly when demand returns to normal.

"With a traditional storage solution, that would mean buying more to deal with a scenario that is unlikely to happen often," says Reid. "Zadara provides us with hardware that is over capacity, so we can expand on a whim or double the performance of the array. And I can do that from the comfort of my office, I don't have to send engineers to site or wait for logistics to get it here."

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AssureStor

zStorage also provides intelligent hybrid arrays that optimize performance and cost efficiency, with performance tiers powered by fast solid state drives (SSDs) and low-costs tiers powered by spinning disks (HDDs). These hybrid arrays place in-demand or "hot" data on the fastest storage tier, and "cold" data on the lowest-cost storage. As data cools down or warms up, for example in a recovery scenario, it is automatically moved to the optimal tier. Cost efficiency is further improved by data de-duplication and compression technologies, which can reduce storage capacity needs by around 50 percent.

"We didn't have a tiering capability with our previous arrays," recalls Reid. "That made our storage environment complicated because we had to manually decide where to send data. Now we let the Zadara hybrid engine use its built-in intelligence. We see the performance, but Zadara just does it like magic. We can be much more cost effective with spending, but still have that SSD performance when we need it."

SOLUTION BENEFITS

SUPPORT TEAM INCLUDED

The 24/7 support included with Zadara's fully managed storage solution has enabled AssureStor to minimize its management burden and worry less about customer data. The company doesn't need to hire more storage engineers as it grows, because support is included with its monthly storage costs.

FASTER TECHNOLOGY REFRESHES

Businesses who buy IT up-front with a CapEx model typically refresh technologies on a three-to-five year cycle. With Zadara, AssureStor can upgrade to newer technologies whenever it makes commercial sense. The Zadara support team helps AssureStor to identify opportunities to optimize its workloads with new technologies.

"When new storage technologies become available, we look at AssureStor's workloads and say, this could help you optimize or consolidate," explains Alasdair Hill, Sales Manager for UK Service Providers, Zadara. "We'll then ship out the new drives, manage the data migration, and take away the old technology. The result is a better bang per buck, or cost per gigabyte. If you've got three-to-five year refresh cycles, 18 months later that technology has moved on and other providers are going to be more competitive. What we do is we take all that away."

ENERGY SAVINGS

The modern storage hardware provided by Zadara has significantly reduced power consumption at AssureStor's two UK data centers.

"Since moving everything over to Zadara and switching off all the old storage arrays, I've seen probably a 30% saving in power," says Reid. "That's driven by the fact that it's new, shiny tin, and the way it works on the OpEx model."

"I've got a team of people looking after the platform... And I don't have to pay for that because it's baked into the cost."

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AssureStor

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PROTECTION AGAINST SHRINKAGE

Zadara's 100%-OpEx model is also protecting AssureStor against potential reductions in its storage needs, allowing the company to invest in growth with more confidence.

"If down the line we lost a large client, we could end up with storage resources we no longer need," says Reid. "With a traditional solution, tough, we pay for it. With Zadara, we have the option to flex down. It de-risks both growth and shrinkage."

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ENABLING INTERNATIONAL GROWTH

With highly flexible storage infrastructure and partnership with Zadara, AssureStor is next considering expansion into mainland Europe.

"We've always been a UK-centric operation but now we're looking at expanding towards Europe and the US," explains Reid. "That would have been very difficult for us historically; we'd have to get investment or redirect profits. With Zadara, we can now look at options to expand our data center footprints towards both mainland Europe and the US very cost effectively, with no concern of a high CapEx spend. We can look at Zadara's shared platform as a ramp-up strategy. Once we've built the pipeline, we could then switch to dedicated resources, still keeping an OpEx model."

Thank you to Jason Reid, Founder and Managing Director, AssureStor Ltd for this interview.

To learn more about AssureStor, please visit www.assurestor.com.

zadara

Zadara is enterprise storage made easy.
Any data type. Any protocol. Any location.

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