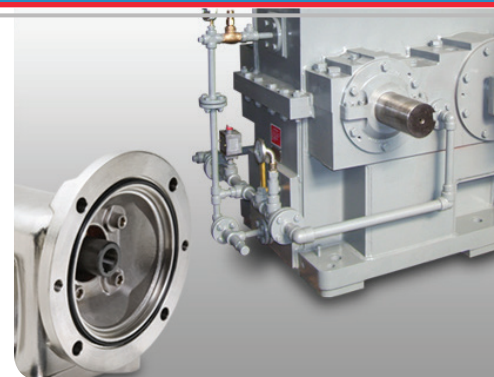# GRIDSTORE®

Altra Industrial Motion Achieves 13X Performance Improvement with Gridstore

Infrastructure refresh with Gridstore HCI yields competitive advantage

Customer Overview

Altra Industrial Motion Corp., ("Altra", NASDAQ: AIMC) a leading global designer and manufacturer of industrial power transmission and motion control products with over 700 million dollars in annual revenue, is well versed in making things work. With 23 well-known manufacturing brands that have been in existence for over 50 years, their expansive product portfolio includes industrial clutches and brakes, enclosed gear drives, open gearing, belted drives and related products serving a broad array of markets.

To meet the challenge of delivering strong business results to shareholders Altra has continued to adapt and grow, including successfully launching numerous organic growth initiatives and executing nine acquisitions, all while maintaining a consistent and focused emphasis on cost control.

Challenge: Modernize aging traditional infrastructure with a single-vendor, cost-effective solution to accelerate Windows workloads

Supporting an agile enterprise focused from the top down on operational excellence, Altra's IT department was struggling to keep pace with rapid change due to market demands, business simplification initiatives, and acquisitions. Like many traditional data centers, its infrastructure was running out of capacity, inflexible, and complex to manage by the lean IT staff. "We were overcommitted on our existing cluster, which led to a performance bottleneck and was a driving reason to find a more modern solution," said John Swanson, Global IT Infrastructure Manager for Altra Industrial Motion. To modernize their data center, they required a solution that could support the rapid pace of change and continue to drive successful business results by being as adaptable as Altra itself.

Altra®
Industrial Motion

Solution Highlights

■ One Gridstore HyperConverged Appliance with four HyperConverged Nodes and four 12TB Hybrid Storage Nodes

■ Business analytics application running on Microsoft SQL Server

■ Other Microsoft workloads such as Sharepoint

Running a mix of backend office, business analytics, and engineering workloads on HP servers with NetApp storage, infrastructure problems would often lead to disputes and multiple support calls to resolve. This led to an effort to find a simple, single-vendor solution that was highly flexible, fault tolerant, and could easily scale with the business. Heavily invested in Microsoft technologies such as SharePoint and SQL Server to support essential applications and services, as a highly-virtualized shop they came to rely on Hyper-V as their virtualization platform of choice. Accelerating the business meant accelerating Microsoft workloads and the mission-critical business and engineering applications they deliver to the enterprise.

In a business environment where timely market data yields a strong competitive advantage, Altra leverages the IBM Cognos Business Intelligence (BI) suite with Microsoft SQL Server on the backend. The SQL-heavy BI analytics workload requires data cubes to be built for further analysis and poor server and storage performance limited the availability of strategic business intelligence to only once per day.

To find a solution for these challenges, Altra evaluated offerings from many vendors, including traditional and hyper-converged platforms. Key decision criteria included the need to scale readily to meet changing demands, in a platform that was profoundly simple to manage. Offering hyper-converged infrastructure (HCI) purpose-built for Hyper-V, Altra was drawn to Gridstore by its ability to accelerate Microsoft workloads with a combination of all-flash performance and guaranteed storage quality of service (QoS). This unique combination of clarity and control would ensure predictable performance for all its mission-critical applications and deliver the agile environment required to support the business now and in the future.

Solution: Native Microsoft integration delivers per-virtual machine (VM) QoS

"Many factors were considered when choosing Gridstore as a vendor to solve our problems," said Swanson. "These factors included, but were not limited to, the use of proven hardware, a better way to manage virtual machines with QoS, Gridstore's attention to detail to ensure our success, and having a flexible and scalable hyper-converged solution that would meet our needs now and in the future."

Gridstore delivers tight, native integration with the Microsoft environment. Its software sits in the Windows kernel, providing end-to-end control of I/O from server to storage. Gridstore HCI was designed to optimize the performance of each virtual machine and provide QoS on a per-VM basis, accelerating Microsoft workloads and allowing Altra's IT staff to shift their focus from managing performance bottlenecks to other business needs. Altra selected and deployed a Gridstore HyperConverged Appliance with four Nodes along with additional external Gridstore storage.

"FAST AND EASY DEPLOYMENT, SIMPLE TRANSITION. WE DEPLOYED THE GRIDSTORE SOLUTION AND HAD A COUPLE VMS RUNNING TO PROVE THE SYSTEM IN LESS THAN A DAY. THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN BETTER THAN EXPECTED. WE STARTED MOVING PRODUCTION SYSTEMS TO THE GRIDSTORE HCI THE DAY AFTER INSTALLATION. THE EASE OF USE AND EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE IS THE MOST NOTABLE GAIN IN OUR ENVIRONMENT."

— John Swanson
Global IT Infrastructure Manager
Altra Industrial Motion

Microsoft Partner
Gold Data Center
Gold OEM

Microsoft
Enterprise Cloud Alliance
Private Cloud Fast Track Program

Solution Benefits

The results achieved with Gridstore were impressive. The system was completely deployed and running test virtual machines within a day, and hosting production workloads shortly afterwards. The performance gains were immediately apparent, "We turned it on and it instantly had the performance we needed." said Swanson. Altra was able to quickly deploy systems to implement the agile environment needed, giving them a much higher confidence in their ability to keep pace with the changing demands of the business. "There are only so many hours in a day. With Gridstore, I have been able to reclaim a significant amount of cycles; from creating VMs to provisioning storage, Gridstore has simplified the administrative side and I now have more time to focus on strategic initiatives" said Chris Mason, Network Administrator, Altra Industrial Motion.

Results Achieved: Gridstore HCI accelerates critical workloads enabling Altra IT to compete more effectively

Altra feels selecting Gridstore was an outstanding choice. The most impressive gains came as a result of Gridstore's unique ability to isolate I/O for each critical workload and provide guaranteed storage QoS to accelerate applications like SQL Server and workloads they support: IBM Cognos SQL data cubes which previously took up to four hours to build were now down to 18 minutes running on Gridstore. Altra's IT team was now able to deliver timely strategic data to its business analysts several times a day instead of just once—a key competitive advantage to stay ahead in a volatile global marketplace.

"After implementing the Gridstore solution, we have spent less time managing and more time providing valuable business services. Ultimately, there has been a vast impact with IT being able to provide more services, faster," said Swanson. "Our business intelligence group can now deliver updated information on a "follow-the-sun" model because it takes only minutes, not hours, for the application build. Now our business units have more current and accurate data to work from."

Results Highlights

- Business intelligence application builds reduced from ~4 hours to 18 minutes

- More timely data when and where needed

- Gridstore reduced footprint from 20U to 6U

- IT staff spends less time "waiting" and more time "doing"

GRIDSTORE.

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