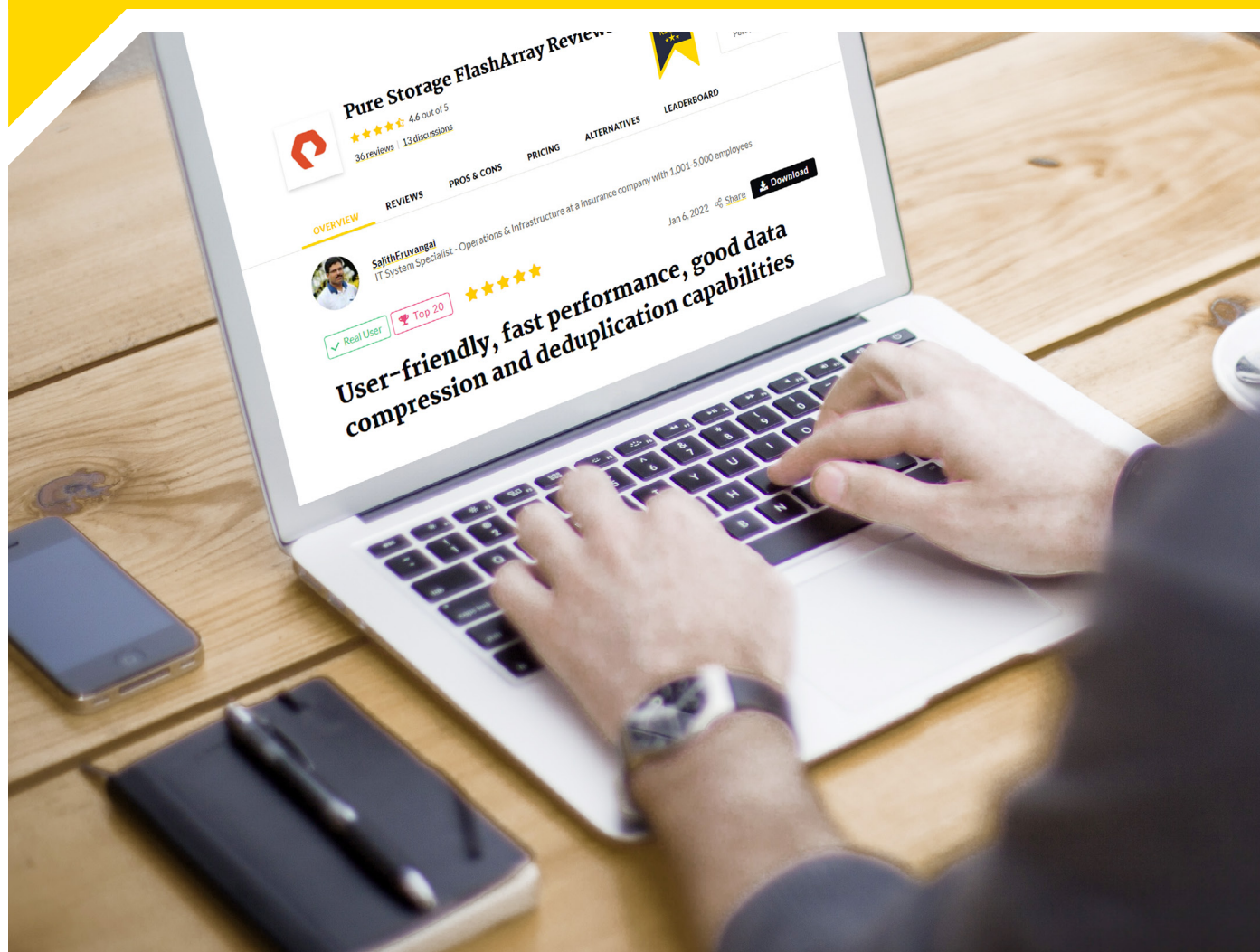


PeerPaper™ Report 2022

Based on real user reviews of Pure Storage FlashArray on PeerSpot

Tips for Evaluating Primary Storage |



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Introduction

What constitutes a great primary storage solution? Real users of Pure Storage solutions on PeerSpot offer insights borne of experience. These storage experts share recommendations on what to look for when evaluating storage solutions. Key criteria include ease of management, built-in enterprise features like snapshots and data replication, non-disruptive upgrades, proactive and predictive support—along with a great customer experience. They also touch on the benefits of subscription models for software/hardware upgrades.

Tips for Evaluating a Primary Storage Solution

The marketplace offers storage professionals many options for primary storage solutions. However, as Pure Storage users on PeerSpot suggest, the right solution will have several key characteristics that help make their jobs easier and solve many of their storage problems. These characteristics include simplicity, quality of support, subscription models and upgrade paths. Primary storage solutions that best embody these qualities deserve the most consideration.

Look For an Uncomplicated Solution

Complexity is the enemy of efficient, effective storage management. An effective enterprise storage solution should provide simple installation, management and expansion / upgrades. This reduces the time spent on storage, so you can focus on business-critical initiatives.

A Cloud Solutions Architect at a tech services company with over 10,000 employees, who has experience with different types of storage, stressed the criticality of usability. When evaluating Pure Storage, he noted, "It is super easy to use in terms of provisioning storage and managing the arrays. I'm able to maintain a multi-site environment with a couple of dozen arrays with a single mid-level storage admin. We do a lot of data replication as well, and the replication features are all easy to set up. The networking controls for setting up interfaces and sub-interfaces are also easy to manage."



**Reduces
process time
from ~2 hours
to 5 minutes**

“Once it’s set up, it just runs on its own and only requires the occasional checkup. It frees us up to do real work.”

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A Systems Engineer at a small tech services company similarly highlighted the usability benefits, saying, “To be honest, Pure Storage FlashArray does not leave us with much to do. Once it’s set up, it just runs on its own and only requires the occasional checkup. It frees us up to do real work.”

The preference for uncomplicated primary storage is particularly relevant when the use case involves migrating from a legacy solution. According to an Enterprise Solutions Architect at a logistics company with over 10,000 employees, “We migrated into Pure Storage FlashArray and we did that migration ourselves. Due to Pure Storage’s professional services, we did an entire migration in under 30 days, which was unprecedented for a company this size, and we did that without impacting business.”

In his case, no business systems were taken down during the migration. Their stores and warehouses were still running throughout the process. He described the experience as “the equivalent of basically moving the basement from underneath your house while you are sleeping, and replacing it with one we wanted. The process was amazing.”

Pure's ease of use also stood out for an IT Manager at a small consultancy, who said, "It performs well and is both flexible and compatible. We like it because it's easy to use." By transferring from their old architecture to all-flash storage, it "made our business faster and more connected to our customers." He then added, "The dashboard is very friendly. We can see information about IOPs and the bandwidth and every host who connects to it – it's very useful. We really like the easy-to-use GUI."

It was the ease of installation and the impact on performance that was most notable to a Storage Solutions Architect at a manufacturing company with over 1,000 employees. "The initial setup was very straightforward," he said. "The deployment took a couple of hours. After installing Pure, the processes that would take 40 minutes to two hours to complete are now done in five minutes."

For an Implementation and Support Engineer at Prasco S.R.L., a small automotive company, "Pure Storage has been of great value to us as it provides us with a lot of great tools, especially for monitoring and capacity planning. Also, Pure Storage is extremely user-friendly." An IT System Engineer at a tech services company with more than 500 employees concurred, saying, "You're just using it, and that's it. You don't have to deal with tier levels, or build and optimize something. Everything is done from the Pure Storage side. Overall, I would rate the solution at a nine out of ten. It's very easy to manage and it works very well."

Look for Enterprise Features that Are Built In

PeerSpot members look for storage solutions that include enterprise features like advanced data protection.

With cybersecurity breaches on the rise, ransomware protection is a key requirement for all businesses. As a Solutions Architect at a value-added reseller (VAR) distributor with over 1,000 employees noted, “One of the features that my customers are really interested in is immutable snapshots. It provides additional protection against ransomware threats. If you are hit by some kind of ransomware threat or some kind of malicious attack, you can revert your data back in time to a previous version or snapshot.”

An IT System Engineer at a tech services company concurred, saying, “With a snapshot, you can schedule it and you can remove it afterward. You can do a kind of production copy. That’s very, very good now, and it’s performing very well.”



**Proactive
support**

“We’ve been using FlashArray’s snapshot for backups. Their replication across sites and response time are also excellent.”

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Data protection was also what mattered to a Solutions Architect at an insurance company with over 50 employees. He said, “We’ve been using FlashArray’s snapshot for backups. Their replication across sites and response time are also excellent.” Replication, coupled with a continuous snapshot capability emerged as enterprise features worthy of consideration by a Technology and Architecture Deputy Manager at a financial services firm with over 1,000 employees.

A Technical Consultant at Injazat Data Systems, a software company with more than 500 employees, felt that the ability to avoid a shutdown procedure during maintenance was an important enterprise-class capability. He said, “You can directly power off the array and manage the shutdown process without any data loss, which is a unique feature. Managing replication and data migration is also very easy.”

Insist on Proactive and Predictive Support

Given the criticality of primary storage, users want their solutions to feature support that is proactive and predictive. Proactive support is valuable in saving time and effort by predicting and alerting admins to potential array problems before they can affect operations. AI and data analysis algorithms work to predict potentially dangerous patterns before they become problems.

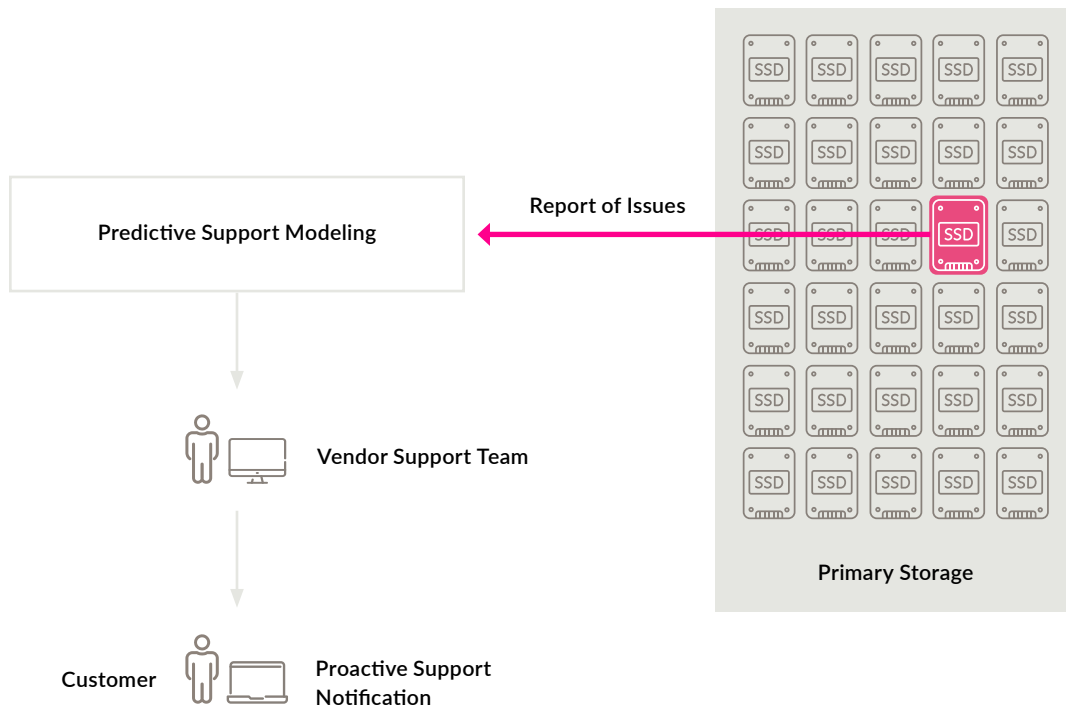
In the case of Pure Storage, Prasco's Implementation and Support Engineer said, "Once we raise a ticket, they respond very quickly. Even better, their support is proactive. In most cases, they are the ones contacting us, not the other way around." Similarly, the Storage Solutions Architect at a manufacturing company shared, "Sometimes, they've let us know about problems before we've even known that they were there."

The VAR's Solutions Architect explained it like this: "They're continuously looking at the dial-homes, the logs that are automatically sent, and fingerprinting potential issues before they're even a problem. That cuts down on a lot of support tickets the customers have to open up." In his experience, Pure Storage will proactively open tickets when they see something in their analytics on a particular customer's array and recognize that one of their hosts might have a certain Host Bus Adapter (HBA) with a fault or a bug. Figure 1 captures the flow of prediction and proactive notification.

"The dashboard is very friendly... it's very useful. We really like the easy-to-use GUI"

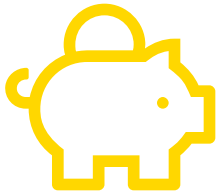
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Figure 1 - A storage vendor's predictive support modeling can "fingerprint" potential issues before they become a problem, and then notify the customer proactively.



“The technical support is 100% and they respond really quickly. Their Evergreen support plan is astonishing. They are a leader in this regard.”

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Saves money

Other comments about the importance of support include:

“There is much redundancy and support is super proactive. This means that if a part goes bad they will generally know about it before we would.” - Systems Engineer at a small tech services company

“We’ve never really had to call tech support for this product as we haven’t had any issues. I attribute that to these guys paying attention to everything, every single detail, to make sure that their product is seamless.” - Enterprise Solutions Architect at a logistics company with over 10,000 employees

“The technical support is 100% and they respond really quickly. Their Evergreen support plan is astonishing. They are a leader in this regard.” - VMware™ and Windows™ Server Team Lead

Choose Primary Storage That Is Easy to Upgrade Without Downtime

A primary storage solution should be easy to upgrade. According to a VAR's Solutions Architect, with Pure's Evergreen subscription, the vendor's support personnel will take care of both software and hardware upgrades. He added, "They have non-disruptive upgrades. You just set up the software and hardware and just consume the storage."

In describing his experience, a tech services Systems Engineer said "We've done upgrades in which multiple controllers were involved and, while changing from one model of the array to another, a single controller was removed. It is swapped out and a new one introduced. Once it's stable they proceed to the next one. We have never experienced an outage in any of the three companies in which I've employed the solution. Even when the controller went down, the arrays remained up."

Opt For a Subscription Model for Software and Hardware Upgrades

A subscription model provides a real advantage when evaluating a primary storage solution. Users have found this approach to offer a range of benefits. As one tech services Systems Engineer explained "We do not incur additional costs beyond the licensing fee. Something that's really awesome about the solution is that the cost is all-inclusive of the features. There is no need to pay for replication or for any additional features. A person is entitled to employ these when they come out."

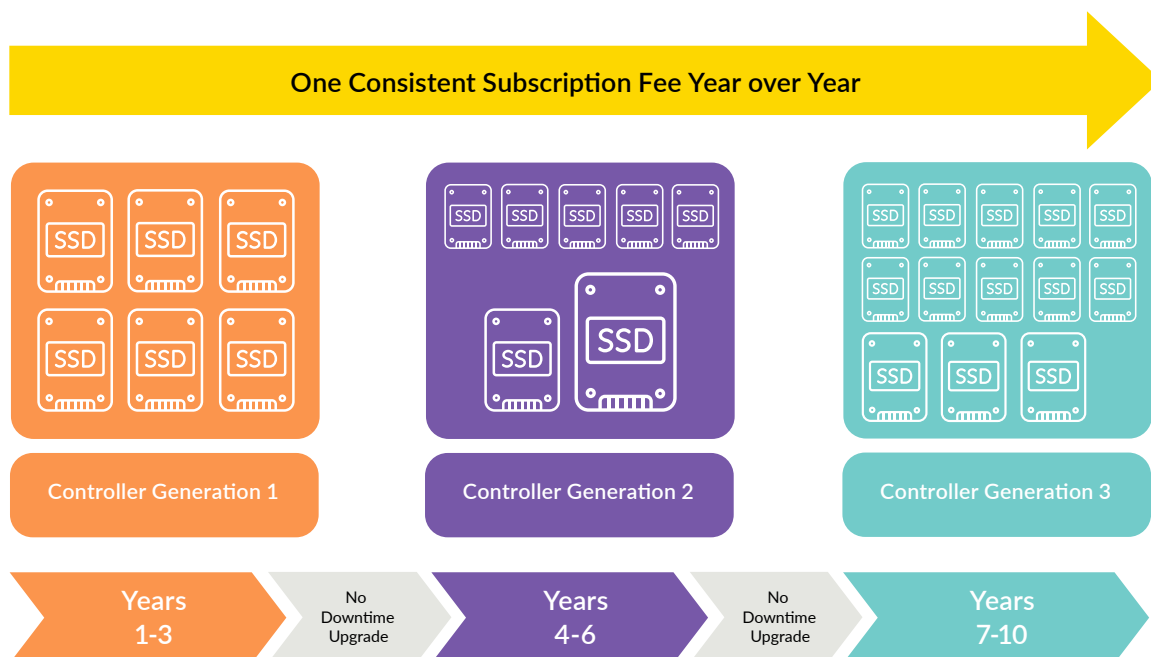
"They have non-disruptive upgrades. You just set up the software and hardware and just consume the storage."

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Ease of upgrade is a big part of the subscription approach, as a tech services Cloud Solutions Architect observed. He said, “We consume it as a service [via Pure as-a-Service], and that’s actually something we really like, or at least I really like from the technical perspective. That’s because it means there is no hassle when we need to upgrade arrays to add capacity. We just interact directly with technical counterparts, and we say, ‘Hey, we’re filling up,’ and they say, ‘All right, here’s another data pack.’ They ship it in, and we install it.”

Pure Storage’s Evergreen subscription that covers hardware upgrades with a traditional purchase is key, according to a logistics Architect, because he found he can swap out the storage controller whenever Pure comes out with a new model. He elaborated, saying, “Their [Evergreen subscription] is probably the most needed in any industry. Especially today in unprecedented times and supply chain issues, their Evergreen solution is amazing. Whenever we come out with a new feature for our system, we just swap out the storage controller. We don’t change anything on our desk and we get the new features. That Evergreen approach in your third year costs you nothing. It’s a great company, great solution. They’re dominating in their space for a good reason.”

Figure 2 – The Evergreen subscription model for primary storage.



“There are true cost savings with this product. If you’re an OPEX-adverse organization, the cost per period is just really low. Pure Storage will give you savings.”

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A Sr. Cloud Systems Engineer at a software company with over 1,000 employees simply stated, “I like that every few years, they provide us with a free controller upgrade.”

Further to this point, a Professional Test Engineer at a software company with over 10,000 employees remarked, “It has an Evergreen model and always maintains the controllers, so the controllers never let you down.” Figure 2 above depicts the Evergreen model.

Insist on a Great Customer Experience

As the customer for a primary storage solution, it makes sense to insist on a great customer experience. This may sound obvious, but it bears being said because, unfortunately, such an experience is not always delivered. Pure Storage users spoke to this issue. For example, a logistics Enterprise Solutions Architect shared, “They’re in a continuous act of improvement with a continuous delivery state. We are so impressed with Pure that even as we are an M&A-based company, if we acquire another company, Pure is automatically selected to be the storage that’s going to replace whatever they have if they’re not already using it.” These remarks reflect a great customer experience.

He went on to quantify the experience, saying, “There are true cost savings with this product. If you’re an OPEX-adverse organization, the cost per period is just really low. Pure Storage will give you savings.”

“I trust them,” said Prasco’s Implementation and Support Engineer. “Their reputation is outstanding. Pure Storage is an amazing solution. I would totally recommend this technology. Overall, on a scale from one to ten, I would give Pure Storage a rating of ten.” This user is also clearly having an excellent customer experience.

A VMware and Windows Server Team Lead said, “With respect to comparing other solutions, when you put all of the features in a box, leverage them and migrate your application to one of these arrays, it will give you a lot of benefits. Some people have compared benchmark performance tests against other arrays and from my point of view, overall as a whole package when you sum everything up, Pure Storage is the winner.”

Comparing Pure Storage to other products, a software company’s Professional Test Engineer commented, “Overall, Pure Storage FlashArray has never let us down in front of customers so far, and I would rate this solution at eight on a scale from one to ten. I think with other products, there are issues with support systems and warranty features. Even the maintenance cost can be very high. In comparison to those products, Pure Storage FlashArray is very good.”

“Their reputation is outstanding. Pure Storage is an amazing solution. I would totally recommend this technology. Overall, on a scale from one to ten, I would give Pure Storage a rating of ten.”

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Conclusion

A great primary storage solution is one that combines a number of distinct qualities. As Pure Storage users explained in their PeerSpot reviews, primary storage must not be complicated. There are enough complications in storage management already. Upgrades should be as effortless as possible. To this end, an Evergreen subscription model is ideal. The model also confers financial benefits. Good support is critical, with proactive and predictive support being the best approach. Solutions that embody these characteristics merit special attention and preference. They have the potential to deliver an outstanding customer experience.

About PeerSpot

The Internet has completely changed the way we make buying decisions. We now use ratings and review sites to see what other real users think before we buy electronics, book a hotel, visit a doctor or choose a restaurant. But in the world of enterprise technology, most of the information online and in your inbox comes from vendors. What you really want is objective information from other users. PeerSpot provides technology professionals with a community platform to share information about enterprise solutions.

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