

Nominee: NetApp

Nomination title: NetApp: Storage Company of the Year

SVC Storage Company of the Year

It's no coincidence that NetApp was born the same year that 'Sonic2sday' took the world by storm, refreshing the imaginations of gamers around the world and unleashing the initial flow of data in 1992. One year later, NetApp shipped its first data storage system and within a few years set its roots down in Amsterdam, establishing its EMEA headquarters. With Uber, Tesla and Netflix for neighbours today, NetApp's EMEA base is often billed as Europe's answer to the Silicon Valley. Standing beside these digital giants and with 25 years at its feet, NetApp is firmly established as a data authority – leading the charge for businesses ready to command digital transformation and compete.

Dedicated to helping customers achieve what matters most to them – providing cutting edge storage solutions, mastering data management and nurturing businesses ready to step into the hybrid cloud – NetApp gives them wings. Fulfilling sci-fi dreams, NetApp provides the hybrid flash storage solutions that enable the European Space Agency (ESA) to chart the world's most accurate 3D map of the Milky Way galaxy – ultimately, cataloguing 1 billion of the 100 billion stars in our galaxy. The full Gaia catalogue is expected to hold more than 2PB of data. Satisfying our more earthly desires, NetApp's All Flash FAS and OnCommand Insight solutions put banking customers in the driver's seat with Société Générale, building the bank of the future with its digital transition programme. Looking ahead, NetApp All Flash FAS technologies are facilitating a better future, using data to reduce carbon footprints with Vital Energi.

Seizing digital transformation

It is fair to say data makes the modern world turn around – and NetApp's mission is to empower businesses to fully harness its power, through education and nurture. Testament to this is NetApp's nomination for the CRN Storage Vendor of the Year Award, reflecting a busy year in its quest to help partners facilitate digital transformation. The Back-up as Service (Baas) solution launch, with partners Node4 and Daisy Group, in January 2017 kick-started the year by bringing businesses state-of-the-art storage technology, without any additional hardware investment. Leading the conversation on the shift from CAPEX to OPEX business strategies in the face of digital transformation, NetApp's strides towards the service-based economy brings customers in line with essential demands upon modern business.

Steve Denby, Head of Solution Sales at Node4 agrees: “Node4 partner with NetApp to deliver innovative service-based solutions that support the modern Digital Transformation age. Today NetApp is easily the most forward thinking partner of all the large vendors that we work with, with an unrivalled ability to execute on our shared vision.”

Building upon its partner programme, which includes the NetApp Masters Programme – providing 10 month training courses preparing partners for digital transformation – May 2017 saw the roll out of NetApp’s new Cloud Value Management programme across EMEA. It provides a three day workshop and consultancy service that empowers new and existing customers to seize the competitive advantage of the hybrid cloud by firstly, fully understanding their business needs.

Testament to NetApp’s strong collaborative approach, enhanced by its social media presence and partner ethos, NetApp won the CRN ‘Best Social Media Presence Award’ this year. According to CRN, the NetApp team won because: “Unlike many of its peers, NetApp has realised the value of social media and has invested in educating its employees on how it should be integrated into their everyday schedule, yielding positive results and a new platform to express NetApp’s business values.”

Solutions driven and nurture focused

Driving the collaboration are the solutions. This year was marked by the launch of FlexPod SF, with Cisco Systems, in June. It expands the portfolio of the industry’s fastest growing integrated infrastructure and certified reference systems with an offering that is uniquely designed for emerging business challenges. The new FlexPod SF solution supports enterprise and emerging architectures with precise storage capacity and performance tailored to the needs of individual tenants in multitenant environments. Safelite, a leading provider of vehicle glass repair and replacement services and NetApp customer took FlexPod SF to task. Matthew Coy, vice president, Information Technology at Safelite Group said: “The high-performance compute and next-generation storage of FlexPod SF provided us a strong foundation for our state-of-the-art claims processing centre.”

Meanwhile, in July NetApp announced the expansion of its Fueled by NetApp programme, designed to help drive growth for service providers who are helping their customers on the path to digital transformation. With this announcement, service providers gain access to new consulting and incubator programmes, as well as new efficiency guarantees and increased training. This is on

top of the programme's go-to-market solutions with scale-out, guaranteed performance, automated management, data assurance, and global efficiencies.

Carrenza, a global cloud service company, turned to NetApp and implemented the market-leading NetApp SolidFire all-flash block storage system to increase the agility and responsiveness of its cloud infrastructure. Matthew McGrory, managing director of Carrenza said: "The Fueled by NetApp consulting team provided us valuable market insights and intelligence that helped us figure out our flash storage strategy in a way that we have not experienced from any other storage company."

Stepping beyond nurture, NetApp struck at the heart of digital transformation with an EMEA-wide survey on attitudes towards GDPR and Cloud Adoption – the most pressing issues for businesses in the digital age. Key findings - including that 56 % of respondents adopt cloud primarily for security reasons and that 73% are concerned, at least to some extent, about meeting next year's GDPR deadline - provided NetApp with important insight into business needs. A few months later, NetApp Cloud Control launched in August to protect against accidental deletion, malware and virus, hackers and ransomware when using the leading SaaS platform, Office 365. Easing concerns following a series of high-profile attacks like WannaCry, NetApp applied its learnings around security. Meanwhile, with the help of Sheila FitzPatrick, NetApp's Worldwide Legal Data Governance & Data Privacy Counsel, NetApp continues to educate on the importance of GDPR compliance through media activities.

Why nominee should win

- Supporting customers by driving the shift to OPEX strategies with the BaaS launch, with key partners
- Putting partners first with the Fueled by NetApp Programme
- Nurturing and empowering customers with the launch of its Cloud Value Management Programme
- Producing competitive storage solutions: the launch of FlexPod SF equips businesses for emerging challenges
- A leading authority on data management, NetApp's revealing research on GDPR and Cloud adoption offers essential insight into the state of the market, business vulnerabilities and the need for further education – with the subsequent media campaigns around GDPR.