

## Case study

# Options leads transformation of financial services infrastructure



## Standardizes on HP 3PAR StoreServ Storage

### Industry

Financial Services

### Industry Challenge

Provide a dependable, global information technology platform that offers a rich user experience expected by financial professionals at a dramatically lower cost than traditional approaches. Serve a wide range of business needs, from email and collaboration to hosting business applications running the front, middle and back office

### Objective

Continue to lead the market in providing hosted managed infrastructure solutions. Add high performance storage capacity and new storage technology to meet growing demand for managed infrastructure provider's services

### Approach

Evaluate market offerings to support significant demand and growth without sacrificing agility and performance requirements

### IT matters

- Thin provisioning technology offers superior performance
- SSDs (Solid-State Drives) in HP 3PAR StoreServ Storage faster than the alternative because of 3PAR's unique flash-optimized technology
- Secure multi-tenancy
- Flexibility to scale, as demand for cloud services grows

**“High-performance storage is a critical platform. HP 3PAR StoreServ is a reliable, trustworthy platform which makes it easy to deal with change as our business grows.”**

– Ken Barnes, senior vice-president of Corporate Development, Options

What began in 1993 as a hedge fund technology services provider focused on the London market has become the premier provider of infrastructure services for the global financial services sector. In 2002, Options made a strategic decision to change its focus from consulting to delivering shared infrastructure products. During the past 13 years, as Options has established itself as a true industry leader in the provision of tailored cloud solutions for the financial markets globally, it has relied on HP 3PAR StoreServ Storage infrastructure to support its business and that of its customers, scaling it out as the company grows and adds new markets and services.

The Options logo, featuring the word 'options' in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letter 'o' is stylized with a vertical line through its center.

## Business matters

### Increase business agility

- Scalable, dynamically tiered HP 3PAR StoreServ enables Options to reduce IT costs so resources can be shifted from operations to innovation and strategic initiatives
- Rapid, autonomic provisioning capabilities reduce new project deployment windows and speed up time-to-market for new services
- HP 3PAR Thin Provisioning software enables the instantaneous deployment of new applications and provisioning of storage for new clients without depending on the traditional storage purchasing cycle

### Reduce TCO for storage

- Advanced internal virtualization, wide striping, and mixed-workload support reduce physical capacity purchases, storage footprint, power usage, and cooling needs without compromising performance
- HP 3PAR StoreServ Gen4 ASICs with Thin Built In drive silicon-based thin conversion to reduce legacy storage capacity requirements and reclaim allocated-but-unused capacity
- HP 3PAR Thin Provisioning software reduces capacity waste by enabling Options to purchase only the disk capacity they need, when they need it

### Increase administrative efficiency

- HP 3PAR Operating System software provides dramatically simplified, autonomic provisioning and management that relieves Options staff of tedious manual administration and reduces the potential for error
- HP 3PAR Thin Provisioning software does away with array planning by enabling Options to provision storage just once for the lifetime of an application
- Integration with HP CloudSystem Matrix provides a simplified way to provision and scale storage for public and private cloud environments

Options offers a private financial cloud solution to customers worldwide, including leading hedge funds, proprietary trading firms, private equity houses, exchanges, and global investment banks. Options has become the managed infrastructure provider of choice for startups and established asset management firms alike, including Napier Park Global Capital, a hedge fund with \$8 billion in assets recently spun out from Citibank.

Options provides companies an alternative to internal IT delivered infrastructure. Its customers depend on it for everything from networking connectivity and running proprietary and third-party applications, to file and print server and trading infrastructure management, to email and messaging with SEC-compliant archiving.

**“We appreciate the fact that HP 3PAR StoreServ was early in the game in terms of bringing multi-tenancy to the platform.”**

— Ken Barnes, senior vice president of Corporate Development, Options

“Financial services customers are looking for their IT leaders to re-factor the cost of IT operations—to release capital tied up in infrastructure and lead the firm by orchestrating services delivered by specialized, focused service providers. Our role is to provide a globally available, rock solid infrastructure platform which CTOs and their business partners can efficiently operate their application platforms upon,” says Ken Barnes, senior vice-president of Corporate Development. “With HP 3PAR StoreServ Storage, we achieve the high level of resiliency our customers demand, and do it efficiently at scale.”

As the financial services industry has become more familiar and comfortable with the cloud model, Options has seen its business grow

## HP 3PAR StoreServ designed for virtual/ cloud environments

rapidly, creating a need for a scalable storage infrastructure to support its core business. In the financial services industry, companies like Options must adhere to regulatory mandates, such as saving data, emails and audit logs for seven years (in the U.S.), with additional requirements in other global financial markets.

“Customers are becoming more quantitative and interested in unstructured data services, just as they’re experiencing increasing pressure to archive more content types for longer periods of time, in more global centers,” Barnes says. “These factors combine to create a need for a flexible data storage fabric we can scale dramatically over time.”

About 13 years ago, Options adopted 3PAR storage because it was the only storage platform designed to be agile, scalable and efficient; in other words, it was built for cloud computing. Today, Options continues to build its cloud infrastructure on HP 3PAR StoreServ due to its continued technology leadership as well as HP’s dedication to service providers with its CloudAgile partner program. As a member of CloudAgile, Options’ relationship with HP has grown into a strategic partnership.

“We made an early bet on 3PAR, which our customers have reaped the benefits of over the years. Through the HP CloudAgile program, we’re now also able to take advantage of co-marketing, sales engagement, special financing, and product development offerings,” Barnes says.

### HP 3PAR StoreServ scales to meet customer demand

While Options was visionary with its managed/hosted cloud model, it fought an uphill battle in its earlier days as the market struggled to understand the risks and rewards of cloud solutions. Today, however, the landscape has changed dramatically and cloud computing has become a widely understood and appreciated implementation design. In fact, Options now estimates that 9 out of 10 new hedge funds are choosing cloud-based platforms over traditional enterprise technology deployments. As a result, Options is

experiencing healthy demand for its services, closing its strongest quarter ever as we go to press in the spring of 2013.

Currently, Options maintains 20 plus data centers in the world’s leading financial services markets in North America, Europe and Asia, with HP 3PAR StoreServ Storage systems residing in most of these data centers. The company’s investment in storage is connected to its rate of growth, as Options must scale up and out as it adds new markets and customers.

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Recently, the company took a look at its storage capacity and undertook the decision to reinvest in its storage platform and expand its capacity. Options went through an evaluation process that included multiple vendors and ultimately refreshed and added new HP 3PAR StoreServ 7000 Storage systems to the platform.

“It is essential to have the flexibility to start small and scale up as we add new markets. We appreciate HP 3PAR StoreServ’s cohesive product line that supports growth as our business needs change,” Barnes says.

Options frequently evaluates the storage market to ensure it delivers the best storage platform for its customers. Through this process, the company continues to choose HP 3PAR StoreServ because of its leadership in the storage market. Options has consolidated its storage needs on HP 3PAR StoreServ—from low tier to high tier systems. Given the company’s deep level of training and expertise with HP 3PAR Storage systems, it was business as usual when Options recently performed its own provisioning and deployment of the new 3PAR StoreServ 7000 Storage systems.

## Customer at a glance

### Hardware

- HP 3PAR StoreServ Storage systems

### Software

- HP 3PAR Thin Provisioning software
- HP 3PAR Operating System software

### HP services

- HP maintenance and support

## High-performance storage

One of the key business benefits Options is realizing with its HP 3PAR StoreServ Storage is cost-savings that it can pass on to its customers. HP 3PAR Thin Provisioning technology, including Thin Provisioning software, minimizes upfront disk drive purchases by reducing the number of disks required to store application data.

“We value the solid performance offered by HP 3PAR StoreServ. Solid-State Drives (SSDs) in 3PAR StoreServ are faster than the alternative because of 3PAR StoreServ’s unique flash-optimized technology,” Barnes says.

Moreover, SSDs provide the efficiency required to manage mixed workloads, which is a crucial business requirement for Options. What’s more, as a cloud services provider, Options finds its multi-tenant platform critical, as it enables the company to support multiple clients from a single, secure storage array.

“We appreciate the fact that HP 3PAR StoreServ was early in the game in terms of bringing multi-tenancy to the platform,” Barnes says.

As the company continues to gain customers and expand into new markets, the connection and collaboration between HP and Options will solidify further. The innovative cloud services provider is forging into new territory, confident in its flexible, scalable, powerful HP 3PAR StoreServ Storage platform.

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“High-performance storage is a critical platform,” Barnes concludes. “HP 3PAR StoreServ is a reliable, trustworthy platform which makes it easy to deal with change as our business grows.”

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