Flexible infrastructure keeps Gruppo SGR competitive in the volatile energy sector

If there was ever a dynamic industry, it's the energy sector—especially in Europe. We're seeing increased demand from residential and industrial users and more calls for sustainability from customers, regulators, and governments. We must also account for supply chain disruptions due to political conflicts and climate change.

To stay ahead of these challenges, energy companies must invest in flexible IT infrastructure so they can pivot to address new market conditions.

That's been our goal at Gruppo SGR, an Italian natural gas distributor and seller. We started as a local provider in Rimini, a northern coastal resort town, in 1956. We have since expanded nationally and internationally through mergers and acquisitions, adding energy saving services, renewable energy, and other businesses to our portfolio.

I've been with the company for 23 years and am currently a senior system engineer in charge of choosing, designing, and managing IT infrastructure. My greatest challenge is ensuring our systems' flexibility, reliability, and scalability, paying particular attention to our storage capabilities as we deal with increasing volumes of data.

Failed attempts at sustainable infrastructure planning

There are two risks when planning infrastructure—over- and under-provisioning. If you over-provision, you're wasting money on unnecessary resources. If you under-provision, you can't respond quickly to business demands, which can sometimes be unpredictable. It can be hard to strike a balance, especially when purchasing traditional storage and compute using a CapEx model and trying to account for growth while futureproofing IT resources.

> **"To stay ahead of challenges, energy companies must invest in flexible IT infrastructure that will allow them to pivot and scale to meet new market conditions."**

Massimo Ambrosini, Systems Area Manager, Gruppo SGR

Another important factor is compliance with ESG criteria. We buy and sell energy, which exposes us to various ESG risks that can affect our carbon footprint. We strive to contribute to sustainable development by offering efficient and renewable energy solutions.

Our commitment to sustainability extends to our internal operations, but traditional IT infrastructure spending and provisioning didn't always align with that commitment. In the past, we had to oversize our resources so we could grow as needed. We spent more money and consumed more energy than we wanted, failing to optimize our IT budget and failing to meet ESG criteria.

Industry: Energy

Country: Italy

Vision
Increase agility, improve reliability and scalability, and reduce over- and under-provisioning of storage

Strategy
Implement a more flexible infrastructure in a unified environment that meets environmental, social, and governance (ESG) compliance requirements

Outcomes

- Reduces time spent on IT infrastructure management tasks by five hours per week
- Frees IT from CapEx budget constraints with scalable, modular, and on demand IT provisioning
- Saves time and money during acquisitions with easy system integrations

An on-demand option from a long-time partner

For more than 15 years, we have used hardware from Hewlett Packard Enterprise, including HPE 3PAR Storage. We were always happy with the price and performance, but as our storage arrays neared end-of-life, we thought it might be good to explore other options that removed our over-provisioning / under-provisioning dilemma. So, we sat down with our long-time technology partner, TT Tecnosistemi, to discuss our options.

Staying with HPE was a must. They'd become a trusted partner, and we had migrated away from other vendors' technology over time, building a unified environment. We wanted things to stay that way, and after carefully considering our needs, TT Tecnosistemi recommended the HPE GreenLake cloud and related as-a-service storage solutions.

The HPE GreenLake offers scalable, modular, on-demand IT provisioning. We can add or subtract capacity based on usage patterns, freeing us from CapEx budget constraints by moving our infrastructure to the OpEx column. We also have access to a broad portfolio of HPE solutions that work seamlessly together, so we can choose components that perfectly match each of our applications.

Tailoring new infrastructure to specific workloads

Using the HPE GreenLake, we have tailored our infrastructure to our workloads. For example, we use HPE ProLiant DL380 Servers and HPE Synergy for workloads with high performance needs. Our HPE ProLiant servers handle our testing and development environment while we use HPE Synergy for our production environment.

Then, using HPE GreenLake for Block Storage (now known as HPE Alletra Storage MP B10000), we have configured a cost-effective, more sustainable solution that relies on HPE Alletra Storage for our most critical business processes that may not need extreme performance but require a lot of data storage. It's a heterogeneous environment with a lot of different workloads, including our Windows/Linux® database, application server, middleware, and more—and with HPE technology, we can cover all the needs without a problem.

We also use HPE MSA Storage for secondary storage at our branch offices and recently deployed a backup solution that leverages HPE ProLiant DL380 Servers to provide real-time immutable backups. These backups allow us to quickly recover if there is an outage or a cyberattack.

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Saving time by streamlining infrastructure management

In addition to HPE GreenLake services, we use HPE Complete Care Service, a modular support and management service that provides a single point of contact and account team for all our equipment. We no longer have to go from department to department or vendor to vendor to address our concerns. Whether troubleshooting an issue, ordering more products and services, or managing our software and hardware assets, we have a direct line to HPE and a dedicated support team.

Our subscription offers multiple service levels and the tools to manage our infrastructure. We subscribe to the general purpose balance tier and use HPE InfoSight to manage our storage and compute. We can verify the performance and throughput of our infrastructure and adjust our IT spend to add capacity on demand instead of guessing what our requirements might be six months or two years from now.

HPE GreenLake and HPE Complete Care Service have freed my team at Gruppo SGR to concentrate on integrating processes and work methodologies without worrying about managing our hardware or provisioning resources. We are now hardware agnostic and save five hours per week on infrastructure management tasks.

With our new infrastructure and more time, we have improved our services. We launched a real-time energy monitoring app for customers of our SGR Luce & Gas subsidiary. Users can log in and pay their utility bills, monitor their consumption rates by time of day, and plan their energy use for off-peak hours. We store and analyze millions of meter readings to provide our customers with this service, and we couldn't have completed the project without HPE Alletra Storage MP B10000.

Gruppo SGR is also expanding. We recently acquired a handful of small companies, each with its own IT infrastructure. HPE Alletra Storage MP B10000 allowed us to integrate their systems with ours and offer scalable storage to each, limiting the purchasing and installation of physical hardware. By merging their operations with ours using a streamlined road map, we saved time and money while maintaining our commitment to sustainability.

Humans make technology better

HPE technology has given us the scalability we need to remain competitive in such a data-driven age—but as pleased as we are with the technology, the human element is just as important.

Technology can fail, and when it does, a trusted vendor will help resolve the issue. But nothing can fix a bad relationship with a technology partner or a vendor. Our strong relationships with HPE and TT Tecnicosistemi mean we can openly communicate our needs, discuss our plans, and map out projects together, and that's the only way we can find suitable solutions.

After nearly 70 years in business, Gruppo SGR continues to thrive. Wars have raised natural gas prices, solar and wind power have transformed the energy market, and legislators continue to adopt new regulations to fight climate change. Through it all, we have well-established partnerships to navigate today's volatile energy market. Thanks to HPE, we have the right technology to meet internal and external challenges as we strive to improve our services and offer greener energy to our customers.

> **"Strong relationships with partners mean we can openly communicate our needs, discuss our plans, and map out projects together. That's the only way to find suitable solutions."**

Massimo Ambrosini, Systems Area Manager, Gruppo SGR

Solution

- HPE Alletra Storage MP B10000
- HPE ProLiant DL380
- HPE Synergy
- HPE MSA Storage
- HPE Complete Care Service
- HPE InfoSight

Key Partners

- TT Tecnosistemi

Learn more at

HPE.com/us/en/Alletra-Storage-MP-b10000.html

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