



# Emilceramica preserves critical data to boost business continuity

HPE Storage transforms production for Italian ceramic tile manufacturer

## Objective

Sought an innovative IT solution to safeguard data centre operations and valuable business, graphic workstation and research and development files

## Approach

Contacted several strategic suppliers and chose an IT partner following four proof of concept trials

## IT Matters

- Provides a reliable, scalable and manageable data centre infrastructure, safeguarding ceramic tile production and other business activities
- Supports the creation of an independent backup capability, protecting mission-critical business, graphical and R&D data
- Offers a reliable, high-performance and scalable archiving system, supporting a long-term preservation strategy

## Business Matters

- Fifty per cent increase in system availability ensuring business continuity and protecting revenue streams
- Creates a readily scalable IT infrastructure, supporting data growth for the foreseeable future
- Delivers a rapid backup and recovery capability, enduring peace of mind



Emilceramica SpA, a leading ceramic tile manufacturer based in Fiorano Modenese, sought a new IT solution to safeguard data centre operations and valuable assets produced by the company's graphic workstations and research and development (R&D) department.

## Challenge

### Protecting valuable assets

Small and medium enterprises offering innovative, specialised products in the wall and floor tile sectors drive today's Italian ceramics industry. The market is renowned for producing attractive designer goods that establish global trends and exports to Europe and North America, it has experienced steady growth over recent years.

### Data loss threat

Based on IBM and VMware® technologies, an IT infrastructure comprising two hosts and a Storage Area Network in one room and a third host with local attached storage at a second location had evolved to support the company's business activities. Business applications include Office and Office365® as well as customised Enterprise Resource Planning software.

“Compared to other companies, we were very impressed with the amount of effort Hewlett Packard Enterprise spent on this project. The innovative hyper-convergent solution is ideally suited to this novel development and we needed an experienced partner for this undertaking.”

– Luca Sghedoni, network and infrastructure manager, Emilceramica SpA

A single 10GB network cable running a distance of one kilometre linked the two sites to facilitate data replication. Emilceramica's graphic designers use workstations to store their day-to-day work while the R&D team also stored data on the workstations. The virtual desktop infrastructure employs a portfolio of Adobe®, Vectorworks and DomuS3D design applications.

“Over the last six years, we've seen our business data grow by 50% while the volume of graphical data has increased six-fold,” explains Luca Sghedoni, network and infrastructure manager, Emilceramica SpA. “After examining the workstation environment, we discovered nearly 40TB data that wasn't being securely backed up. Storing data in this manner is a high-risk strategy as there's a high probability of data loss.”

#### **Innovative hyper-converged solution wins trials**

To resolve the lack of disaster tolerance, address data centre performance and backup management issues, Emilceramica quickly established a project to refresh data centre operations and provide the necessary storage and backup capability for the graphical and R&D data.

“Important solution requirements included high availability to ensure business continuity, longer data retention times, graphical workstation accessibility from different locations, protecting all data types and significantly lowering data deployment times to workstations,” continues Sghedoni.

The company contacted several strategic suppliers and asked four organisations including Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE). Working with NETMIND, a local HPE partner, a proof of concept was designed and developed.

“Compared with other companies, we were very impressed by the amount of effort HPE spent on this project,” says Sghedoni.

“The innovative hyper-converged solution is ideally suited to this novel development and we needed an experienced partner for this potentially risky undertaking.”

## **Solution**

### **Long-term archiving protects business data**

To address the data centre issues, Emilceramica has deployed three HPE ProLiant DL380 Gen9 servers and two HPE 5700 switches at both the primary and secondary sites with four 10GB cables linking the data centres to support cross-site replication of data. HPE StoreVirtual VSA software acts as the storage virtualisation platform, creating a cluster of six VMware hypervisors. An HPE StoreEver MSL2024 Tape Library with two LTO6 tape drives and a capacity of 90TB provides a long-term archiving capability with the tapes being stored at a secure off-site location.

## Case study

Emilceramica SpA

## Industry

Ceramics

### Customer at a glance

#### Hardware

- HPE StoreEver MSL2024 Tape Library with two LTO6 tape drives
- 2 x HPE StoreEasy 1650
- 6 x HPE ProLiant DL380 Gen9 servers
- 4 x HPE 5700 Switches

#### Software

- HPE StoreVirtual VSA
- HPE StoreOnce VSA

### Emilceramica SpA

Based 45 kilometres north-west of Bologna, Emilceramica employs ceramic technology to create tiles that represent and embody Italian culture in a contemporary manner. The company's products satisfy any type of residential or architectural requirement and are available in 70 countries and at 550 sales outlets. The Emilceramica Group offers six well-known tile brands and has interests in Asia, Brazil, Russia, Ukraine and the USA. Annual ceramic tile production stands at eight million square metres.

[emilgroup.it](http://emilgroup.it)

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– Luca Sghedoni, network and infrastructure manager, Emilceramica SpA

### Virtual machines lower deployment times

To handle the graphic workstation and R&D files, each data centre site also houses a second cluster of VMware hypervisors within a HPE StoreVirtual VSA environment. An HPE StoreEasy 1650 file and application storage system provides Network Attached Storage while HPE StoreOnce VSA software safeguards both sets of data and ensures business continuity or rapid recovery should a system failure take place. NVIDIA® technology enhances workstation performance while Citrix software deploys the graphical data.

“Opting for virtual machines rather the physical devices has accelerated the deployment of data to the graphical workstations substantially. Previously, this process was unacceptably slow,” reveals Sghedoni.

### Benefit

#### Peace of mind

Emilceramica is currently reaping the benefits of the new HPE hyper-converged solution. The infrastructure has sufficient scalability to support operations for the foreseeable future and system availability has risen by 50%, ensuring business continuity. Moreover, the solution ensures mission-critical business, graphical and R&D data is protected at all times. Following a recent routine maintenance period, the company praised a rapid return to production due to the solution's robust recovery capability.

“We're very satisfied with HPE technology as it's efficient and easy to manage. We've constant access to all our data and there's no threat whatsoever to production. We have complete peace of mind” concludes Sghedoni.

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