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Blazing fast storage array meets the challenges of a changing world

The Dell EMC PowerMax storage platform helps home design leader Umbra respond to growing business and technology demands in a market that's increasingly driven by rapid change.

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VP of Analytics and CIO,
Umbra

Business needs

Umbra's accelerating growth was quickly maxing out its aging IT infrastructure. Dell EMC PowerMax provides a storage platform for the company to effectively manage everything from design to manufacturing and distribution, leveraging data to align its business strategies and capitalize on promising business opportunities.

Solutions at a glance

- Dell EMC PowerMax
- Dell EMC PowerEdge
- Dell Technologies Boomi

Business results

- 400% more efficient to produce key reports and run critical processes.
- 500% faster responses on SAP BW updates leveraging Intel Optane SCM drives.
- 3.4:1 data reduction ratio to reduce storage space needs and costs.
- Excellent resilience to ensure operational availability 24x7.

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Umbra is a home design company based in Toronto, Canada. The company designs furniture, decor, accessories, organizers and more for the entire home, selling its products in 75,000 stores in 125 countries. Vertically integrated, Umbra manufactures the majority of its original designs in its own facilities worldwide.

To succeed, the company has always ensured that its IT infrastructure is in lockstep with its business strategy, with a focus on addressing timely business opportunities. But faced with an aging infrastructure, Umbra was concerned that it could be limiting its growth.

"Given the world today and the rapid rise in e-commerce, we've seen a significant increase in the demands on our business and IT," says Tariq Jamal, vice president of analytics and CIO at Umbra. "The growing number of orders is significantly increasing the amount of data our SAP environment has to ingest. We chose Dell EMC PowerMax to provide blazing fast storage for all of our enterprise applications."

Powering a digital transformation

At the core of Umbra's ongoing digital transformation, PowerMax storage not only gives the company the performance improvements it needs now, but also provides the scalability and flexibility it requires for the future.

Umbra's product lifecycle management (PLM) serves as a blueprint for innovation, with product design ideas documented and tracked. Among the enterprise's most critical applications

and workloads running on PowerMax are SAP and MySQL databases, Boomi, a Citrix-based virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) and Atlassian Jira tracking.

Umbra streamlines its global warehouse operations in Toronto, Buffalo and multiple locations in China with the help of its Citrix VDI and Dell Wyse thin clients, all running on PowerMax.

"Our technology stack is the foundation of successful order fulfillment, right down to the experience an end consumer receives," Jamal explains. "Our most critical workloads benefit from PowerMax with its end-to-end NVMe and SCM drives powered by Intel Optane technology."

Exceptionally simple to implement and manage.

Dramatic performance improvements

In the past, Umbra had some SAP processes that took hours to run. Following the rollout of its new storage array, all that changed. "After upgrading to PowerMax, we've had a 400% improvement in our SAP processes, completing them in 30 minutes rather than up to two hours," notes Jamal. "Our users no longer wait for screens to refresh or reports to run. PowerMax lets team members work faster and more efficiently."

PowerMax and its Intel Optane-powered storage class memory (SCM) drives are also making a big difference in the performance of SAP InfoCubes within SAP's Business Warehouse (BW) application. "We've seen improvement of as much as 500% with PowerMax and SCM Optane technology when updating data within SAP BW," Jamal remarks. "PowerMax delivers the extreme performance and responsiveness people need without a lot of extra effort on our part to manage things."

In addition, Umbra's improved data reduction ratio is 3.4 to 1 — better than Umbra was expecting when it selected PowerMax — which helps reduce the need for additional storage.

Machine learning simplifies storage management

Along with exceptional performance, scalability and dependability, Umbra wants technology that's simple to manage.

"PowerMax allowed us to get up and running quickly," Jamal comments. "Our IT team doesn't need a Ph.D. or handbook for simple things and routine tasks. A PowerMax upgrade can be as easy as updating an application on your smartphone. We also don't have to manage the array to ensure that it meets the speed, performance and other requirements of our business — that's the beauty of PowerMax's machine learning."

Jamal continues, "In a business where we're not only coming up with ideas, but we're also executing them — through manufacturing and delivery of goods to end consumers — having a solution that's as resilient and dependable as PowerMax is critically important to us."

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