

## PADDYPOWER.

# Paddy Power

*Accommodating unprecedented levels of growth with scalable technology*

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### Overview

#### The need

What if your business was almost doubling in size each year – could your IT keep up? Bookmaker Paddy Power wanted to eliminate the risk of losing customers if its systems couldn't meet demand.

#### The solution

The company used IBM® FlashSystem™ 820 technology to provide near-linear scalability in performance for the critical applications underpinning its online and retail business.

#### The benefit

Increases application performance by up to 1,200 percent, seamlessly handling peaks in customer demand. Enables predictable scalability for future needs. Efficiency savings deliver 18-month ROI.

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With a 25-year history of innovation, Paddy Power has grown to become one of the world's leading online betting and gaming groups. Its online business complements its 500-strong network of bookmaking shops across Ireland and the UK. Paddy Power employs more than 4,400 people and achieved record revenues of EUR6.2 billion (USD8.5 billion) in 2013.

#### Price of success

Growing by up to 45 percent year-on-year, Paddy Power continues to go from strength to strength. But when this expansion threatened to outstrip the scalability of its IT infrastructure, the company faced the risk of stalling in its rise to the top.

Shane Sweeney, Head of Engineering at Paddy Power, elaborates: "There is no doubt that Paddy Power has enjoyed outstanding rates of growth. But unless our systems can keep up with the escalating amounts of data generated by our website and retail shops, we are in trouble."

Paddy Power operates in a highly time-sensitive industry. Its retail shops need to keep track of odds that change every second, or risk losing money when the market moves. Similarly, an unresponsive website that can't complete customers' transactions quickly enough could persuade them to jump ship to a competitor. As a result, slow performance or downtime for its critical applications can instantly affect profitability.



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*Understanding exactly where the business stands helps Paddy Power decide where it should go next. "With FlashSystem, we are able to accelerate reporting so that we know the previous day's profits by 7a.m. every day, no exceptions. Decision-makers are always equipped with an up-to-date picture of the business," says Shane Sweeney, Head of Engineering, Paddy Power.*

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## Solution components

### Hardware

- IBM® FlashSystem™ 820

### IBM Business Partner

- Logicalis
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“Our storage infrastructure needs to be able to deal with the massive spikes in betting volumes during big sporting events such as the Grand National,” says Sweeney. “As we approached the limits of our existing storage capacity, we began looking for something different. If we could unlock new levels of scalability, we could support the business in reaching new heights of success.”

## Revolutionary approach

Paddy Power found the answer to its growing pains in highly available, extreme-performance flash storage from IBM. Sweeney explains the reasoning behind the company’s choice: “In our view, IBM FlashSystem is industry-changing due to its unique combination of speed, stability and scalability – no other solution we’ve seen on the market matches up.”

Engaging IBM Business Partner Logicalis, Paddy Power elected to deploy ten IBM FlashSystem 820 devices. The company embarked on a proof-of-concept exercise and immediately decided to proceed with a full implementation.

“We decided to become an early adopter because we trusted the technology – and the decision paid off,” comments Sweeney. “Logicalis added value by providing us with a turnkey solution, liaising with IBM to manage the procurement, implementation and data migration so we were up and running in just eight weeks.”

## First over the finish line

By deploying the FlashSystem, Paddy Power resolved bottlenecks within its infrastructure to achieve immediate and significant performance improvements for a range of critical applications. For example, batch processing that used to take 18 hours is now completed in just two hours – nine times faster – ensuring that the company’s resources are not tied up when they might be needed.

Sweeney says, “We are seeing performance improvements of up to 1,200 percent for some of our most important applications – in fact, many of them can’t keep up with the speed of FlashSystem! In practical terms, this means our shops get the odds information they need to stay competitive, while our website customers can place their bets in the blink of an eye.”

The impact of the solution was most obvious when it was put to the test during one of the company’s largest events: the annual Cheltenham races. Sweeney describes: “Cheltenham was the first real test for the FlashSystem, and it passed with flying colours. In the past, we have faced storage performance issues when betting volumes get unusually high, but not this year. While many of our competitors had outages during the races, we ran smoothly the entire time as the FlashSystem was able to flex to accommodate massive peaks in demand.

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*“FlashSystem improves performance for our most important applications by up to 1,200 percent.”*

— Shane Sweeney, Head of Engineering,  
Paddy Power

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Sweeney explains, “Many traditional storage platforms rely on identifying and adapting to a company’s typical profile to optimise performance; but that approach simply won’t work for us because our workload is so unpredictable and changeable. The exceptionally low latency of the FlashSystem is ideally suited to our type of environment, delivering lightning speed all the time.”

### **Making financial sense**

Combining exceptional performance with savings in energy and floor-space requirements, the FlashSystem offers Paddy Power a compelling business case.

“We estimate that the FlashSystem will pay for itself in a maximum of 18 months,” states Sweeney. “Since we expect it to support our business for at least three years, this is great value. To put the floor-space savings in perspective: we have gone from storage the size of a fridge to something the size of a pizza box. It’s astonishing that something so small and unassuming can make such an impact on the speed at which we do business. We have even suggested to IBM that they add some go-faster stripes to the chassis!”

### **Eliminating barriers to growth**

By implementing IBM FlashSystem, Paddy Power is confident that it has the scalability it needs within its storage infrastructure to support the ongoing growth of the business.

“IBM FlashSystem provides us with near-linear scalability, giving us peace of mind that storage will not be a bottleneck as the business continues to expand,” says Sweeney. “The solution is configured so that we know exactly what we would need to do to scale up by, for example, 400 percent. This sort of predictable scalability means the prospect of growth is quite straightforward.”

Sweeney concludes, “In all the months since we deployed the solution, we have never once questioned our decision. Moving to FlashSystem means that we never have to worry about storage meeting the demands of our business.”

### **For more information**

To learn more about IBM solutions, contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website:

[ibm.com/systems/storage/flash](http://ibm.com/systems/storage/flash)

To learn more about Logicalis, visit: [www.ie.logicalis.com](http://www.ie.logicalis.com)



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