CUSTOMER: First Option Mortgage
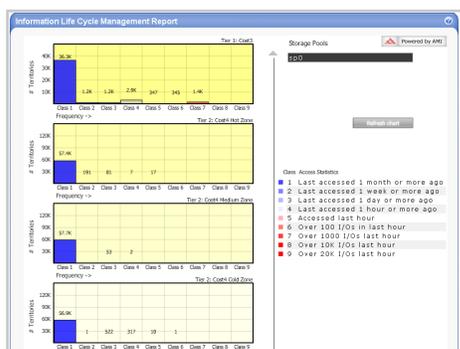
CHALLENGE: Transitioning the Information Technology environment from physical to virtual as well as adding direct replication.

The IOPs are stable and the StorTrends SANs chug along delivering the performance that is needed for its Tier II and Tier III environment.

Through AMI's StorAID support organization, Matt and team receive 24 x 7 phone support

Easy-to-Manage Data Storage for the People You Call FIRST!

"First Option Mortgage . . . the people you call . . . FIRST!" It's not just a catchy jingle, it's the core philosophy of the business and its founding partners. In a very crowded mortgage and home lending market, it has served First Option well. First Option executives have leveraged their "customer first" approach to grow from a regional business based in Atlanta to a true player in the home finance industry in the United States. First Option now has more than 200 employees and offices in just about every state in the continental U.S.

Despite the difficult economic environment, they continue to see strong growth as they work to serve not only first time home buyers, but customers that are looking to refinance and get out of upside-down situations.

The Journey to Virtualize:

Business growth has presented unique challenges for First Option's IT team in Atlanta, GA. Consider the scope, led by VP of IT Matt Berry; the IT team manages enterprise applications, databases, the First Option corporate website, First Option intranet sites, and the internal First Option network.

A few years ago, the First Option data center was 100% physical, but as data center management costs continued to climb, Matt and team recognized that the time had come to virtualize. Moving forward to today, things are very different. That 100% physical environment is now 90% virtual. Matt's team now manages approximately 100 VMs on 3 ESX servers, each mapped to a specific piece of software or process. First Option has also begun to virtualize desktops, with 85 people working through Citrix XenDesktop.

But many IT executives know from experience, heavy virtualization has the capability to "break the back" of the supporting storage infrastructure. To avoid any issues, Matt has developed a robust storage solution that includes three tiers of storage: Tier I to cover absolute mission-critical data accessed hourly and daily, Tier II to manage frequently accessed but non-priority data, and Tier III to serve in a backup and archiving capacity.

StorTrends and First Option: Reliable, Easy-to-Manage Storage

When it came time for First Option to identify a solution to support Tier II and Tier III data, Matt Berry first turned to their trusted IT partner and storage reseller. Matt placed ease of use, reliability, VMware compatibility and affordability at the top of his priority list. The storage reseller came back with a recommendation to check out American Megatrends, Inc.'s (AMI) StorTrends SAN solutions.

The GUI of the StorTrends ManageTrends software caught Matt's attention. "The StorTrends ManageTrends GUI is absolutely the best GUI I've seen. It's ridiculously easy to use. That and StorTrends' highly affordable pricing made it a compelling product for our Tier II and III needs."

Sold on StorTrends, Matt purchased and implemented the StorTrends arrays. First Option is now using two StorTrends arrays with SATA drives to support Tier III data, managing approximately 16 TBs of total capacity. The StorTrends array with SAS drives is used in the First Data Tier II environment. Both StorTrends solutions both utilize auto tiering and Zoned Bit Recording (ZBR) to help Matt keep the most frequently accessed archival data on the top performing disks (and in the case of ZBR, on the outer ring of those disks).

StorTrends®

Performance Storage. Proven Value.

CUSTOMER STORY

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— **Matt Berry,**
Vice President of IT,
First Option Mortgage

Matt is also replicating between the StorTrends arrays now that he has them set up in a more standard HA configuration.

With a culture that places performance measurement above all else, Matt has closely watched the performance of the StorTrends arrays. The IOPs are stable and the StorTrends SANs chug along delivering the performance that First Option needs for its Tier II and Tier III environment.

Support has also been a big positive for First Option. Through AMI's StorAID support organization, Matt and team receive 24 x 7 phone support from resources based at AMI headquarters in Norcross, GA. And if needed, First Option can access the team that actually developed the StorTrends products his team uses. A unique feature indeed. Matt notes that "the StorTrends solutions at First Option have been a very good investment. The SANs do exactly as promised. For the money and ease of use, StorTrends is a real value."

For more information on First Option Mortgage, please visit: http://www.firstoptiononline.com/

For more information on StorTrends from American Megatrends, Inc., please visit: http://www.stortrends.com/

IT Quick Fact:

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