



CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

## Automotive



### ALD AUTOMOTIVE | STORAGE SYSTEM

Implement a future-proof, fast, resilient storage system supporting Veeam

#### ALD AUTOMOTIVE DRIVES ITS BUSINESS FURTHER

ALD Automotive embarked on a journey to replace the outdated storage system with a new solution that would make performance bottlenecks a thing of the past and offer perfect integration with Veeam. The company turned to NetApp partner Simac to purchase a NetApp FlexPod system equipped with NetApp storage and Cisco UCS components.

ALD Automotive was looking for a new storage system to eliminate performance bottlenecks and implement a future-proof system supporting Veeam for data backup and recovery.

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“The FlexPod whitepaper, which was created by NetApp and Cisco, was simply perfect and enabled us to get familiar with the new infrastructure and get it up-and-running by ourselves.”

Cédric Ghiot

ICT Infrastructure Expert, ALD Automotive

## THE CUSTOMER PROFILE

A global fleet management, car rental, and long-term full-service vehicle leasing firm, ALD Automotive, including its subsidiaries and direct partners, takes the largest share in the Belgian market. The company is headquartered in Evere, Brussels, and has several offices across Belgium. ALD Automotive is part of an international group that is based in 41 countries.

ALD Automotive has a fleet of 1.4 million leased vehicles, making it the second largest leasing firm in the world – the company even ranks second in European footprint.

ALD Automotive in Belgium manages IT operations for both Belgium and Luxembourg. Combined, the company employs 330 staff in Belgium, 80 of whom work in Luxembourg.

ALD Automotive’s competitive edge is the comprehensive portfolio that the company can offer, from Diesel-operated engines to electrical lease bicycles and cars. Placing client satisfaction at the core of its strategy, ALD Automotive provides fleet managers and drivers with innovative tools and services to make their everyday business easier and resolve new challenges.

## THE CHALLENGE

After five years, ALD Automotive’s previous set-up had reached the end of its lifetime and was up for replacement. Specifically, the rack servers consisted of individually managed components and were reaching their performance limits. The latency between the compute layer and the storage layer was a clear bottleneck for ALD Automotive’s Business Intelligence application. The storage layer itself had reached its IOPS limit and was unable to deliver the amount of IOPS required for operations to run optimally.

ALD Automotive was specifically looking for an integrated system with easy manageability, allowing the IT infrastructure department to manage the entire system as a single solution, alleviating the IT workload, for instance for the DRP (Disaster Recovery Plan) test scenario.

Since the IT department has always used Veeam as the master management console, the new system had to specifically offer robust support for managing data backups and disaster recoveries through the existing Veeam deployment.

## THE SOLUTION

Before making a final decision, ALD Automotive explored a number of options, including hyper-converged.

NetApp was able to offer a solution fulfilling all of the company’s needs. ALD Automotive then turned to NetApp partner Simac to implement a mini FlexPod solution consisting of a Cisco mini UCS component and NetApp storage. Simac delivered all components at the ALD Automotive site, but ALD Automotive opted for self-guided installation of the system. Cédric Ghiot, ICT Infrastructure Expert at ALD Automotive, explains: “The FlexPod whitepaper, which was created by NetApp and Cisco, was simply perfect and enabled us to get familiar with the new infrastructure and get it up-and-running by ourselves.”

Simac performed a final validation together with ALD Automotive before enabling the production environment onto this newly installed platform.

## THE BENEFITS

- Perfect integration with Veeam
- Cost reduction through consolidation
- Predictable, low-latency data throughput
- Peace of mind because of synchronized environments

Simac is a leading IT integrator offering a wide range of services in the field of consultancy, end-to-end integration, remote monitoring and outsourcing to the Benelux. Simac has 45 years of experience in the IT industry. In Belgium, the company has a team of 175 experienced consultants, service engineers, project managers and service-level managers who have specialized knowledge of all IT infrastructure aspects.

### THE BUSINESS BENEFITS

The mini FlexPod solution is flexible, scalable, stable, and future-proof, with more than enough capacity to handle new initiatives or peak workloads. Thanks to a great improvement in data density, both on compute and storage, ALD Automotive is now able to place the entire infrastructure stack within one rack, enabling great cost savings as well as easy migration. Data replication to ALD Automotive's disaster recovery site is handled through NetApp SnapMirror and SnapVault products as part of the FlexPod deployment.

Ludwin De Backer, ICT Infrastructure Supervisor at ALD

Automotive, added: "Through plugins and APIs, NetApp integrates perfectly with Veeam and truly lives up to the joint promise of 'Better Together'. Because of the perfect integration between NetApp and Veeam, we are now able to keep our disaster recovery site in-sync. Whenever we decide to perform a DR test, the latest data is always available at the DR site."

Thanks to data efficiency features in NetApp ONTAP 9 management software, ALD Automotive has been able to achieve a great deduplication ratio and savings in compute and storage. The new set-up even allows for further consolidation and further cost savings.

ALD Automotive now has a stable backup and disaster recovery infrastructure, giving the IT department peace of mind that data will always be safeguarded should an unfortunate disaster occur.

ALD Automotive's Business Intelligence and Oracle operations have seen a noticeable performance increase, enabling the

company to deliver results faster. The system's overall resilience has greatly improved. .

Ludwin De Backer concludes: "The available documentation from both NetApp and Cisco was perfectly understandable and allowed us to self-configure the environment and gain expert knowledge of the infrastructure stack.

### THE FUTURE VISION

ALD Automotive's vision is Mobility-as-a-Service, multi-mobility (people who combine different ways of transport), car sharing/pooling initiatives, electrical fleet, etcetera. Now that the company has employed a scalable, future-proof and agile IT system, new initiatives focused on that vision can be implemented with confidence.

### SOLUTION COMPONENTS

#### NETAPP PRODUCTEN

NetApp FlexPod

NetApp SnapMirror

NetApp ONTAP 9.1

NetApp SnapVault

Veeam & VMware

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