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Ester Lior, Storage Director, Bank Leumi

Benefits: Getting Extra with Nextra

Nextra™ System	Business Value to Bank Leumi
Exceptional tier-1 performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better performance, even with the most demanding applications
Snapshots and other tier-1 system features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> True, first-time-ever, multi-generation, logical backup for demanding applications Functionality tailored to users, not system limitations
Ease of management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced efforts, “tighter ship” Better service to company users Freeing of administrator resources to other tasks
Single-tier solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved organizational efficiency Simplified operations
Cost advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost-benefit value of no tiering

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“I can list numerous ways in which Nextra brings us value – the simple fact is that Nextra has given us a real, single-tier solution for the first time, with a host of business benefits, making life simpler and happier for everyone.”

Itzik Malach, Executive Vice President, Bank Leumi

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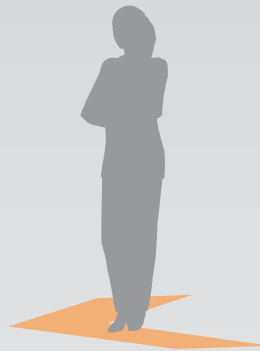
Nextra™ Success Story

Bank Leumi Revolutionizes Its Storage Paradigm after Discovering Superior Performance, Ease of Management, and Real Single-Tier with Nextra™

At a Glance: Bank Leumi’s Nextra™ Solution



Customer	Bank Leumi, one of Israel’s largest banks
Industry	Banking & Finance
Environment	Solaris, VMware™, boot from SAN, AIX®, Windows®
Nextra systems	7
Challenge	To deliver excellent tier-1 storage services while minimizing costs
Features in use	Snapshots, writable snapshots, copy, remote mirroring, storage pools
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance superior to its previous, multi-vendor tier-1 systems, and inclusive of snapshots • Exceptional ease-of-use and reduced management • Consolidation of tiers, creating a single solution for tier-1 and tier-2 needs



Overview

The Leumi Group deals with a diversity of banking, financial and non-banking activities — domestic and international. The bank operates in over 318 branches and agencies across 21 countries, and in leading financial centers. It is one of Israel's largest financial institutions, with over 12,000 employees and annual revenues of \$1.73 billion.

“*Our most demanding application ran with difficulty on our tier-1 systems — snapshots were out of the question. Nextra gives us three times the performance, and with 28 snapshots!*”

*Itzik Reuven, Storage Administrator,
Bank Leumi IT Center*

Bank Leumi's IT team had objectives typical to those of their counterparts in the finance arena: ensuring high system performance and reliability while utilizing rich features for optimized administration. An ongoing challenge to those objectives was an ever-growing capacity need, as well as tight IT budgets limiting equipment purchases and administration team size.

Always seeking a better mousetrap to meet its objectives, the Leumi team opted to put a single Nextra system in place. Given that the system was then a newcomer to the storage market, Leumi cautiously anticipated a two-year trial period. Yet within five months, due to overwhelming results,

the system was put into production. The bank ultimately installed a total of seven Nextra systems in the first 19 months, at its primary as well as disaster recovery sites.

Today, Bank Leumi leverages Nextra's single-tier architecture to consolidate storage tiers, achieve excellent performance, and dramatically reduce management overhead.

Putting Nextra to the test

As part of its “proof of concept” efforts, the bank's team subjected the Nextra system to the rigors of its most challenging tier-1 application. Based on an Oracle® database, the application uses 7 terabytes in volume, with heavy performance requirements due to intensive writes and demanding analysis processes. The application had difficulty running on one of their most powerful tier-1 systems—and only without snapshots—and had failed on another one. “Snapshots were out of the question,” explained Itzik Reuven, storage administrator for the bank's IT center. Without snapshots, Leumi's backup solutions were more complex and less effective.

On Nextra, the application ran smoothly from the start, not just keeping pace with write requests but actually completing each analysis process within 1/3 of the time. The greater surprise came with the system's robustness under snapshots. The bank discovered that it could sustain 28 differential snapshots—4 a day, over 7 days—while maintaining the same high performance levels. “Nextra gives us three times the performance, with a whopping 28 snapshots,” Reuven declared.

In effect, the Nextra snapshot feature has given the bank its first true, multi-generation, logical backup solution. Reuven further noted that the easy-to-use mechanism produces snapshots “instantly” and makes light work of writing and maintaining backup scripts.



Ease of use dramatically simplifies system management

Another surprise was Nextra’s ease of management. The bank was accustomed to carrying out tedious storage provisioning processes on its tier-1 systems. It spent much time on maintenance, such as monitoring performance levels and migrating volumes between RAID groups. The performance of its systems would otherwise degrade, and quickly, such as when new applications were deployed or application usage patterns changed. Nextra eliminated the need for such tasks. “We can handle volume provisioning in less than a minute, and without any configuration process, because Nextra automatically and perfectly balances load across all applications and physical resources,” stated Itzik Reuven, Storage Administrator, Bank Leumi.

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Attractive TCO invites tier-2 data migration

Another important advantage for the Leumi team came in realizing Nextra’s cost-benefit value. “Taking into account direct and indirect costs (management effort, power consumption, density, etc.), we found the Nextra system to also be cost-competitive for tier-2 storage,” explained Ester Lior, Storage Director, Bank Leumi. “We are using Nextra for applications that previously ran on our tier-1 and tier-2 systems — in short, we’re getting tier-1 capabilities without tier-1 costs.” By providing a much more effective cost-cutting alternative than the practice of splitting storage solutions between tiers and architectures, Nextra enabled Bank Leumi to alter and optimize its storage paradigm.

Through high-end performance and features at a total TCO considerably lower than typical tier-1 systems, Nextra has enabled Bank Leumi to achieve its dual objective of delivering excellent tier-1 storage services while minimizing costs.

