

Room & Board: Modern Furniture and Modern Technology



Room & Board is known for its commitment to trend-proof style, American craftsmanship, and sustainability. In 2019, Fast Company named Room & Board one of the Most Innovative Companies in Retail. Ian Hillier's expertise in virtualization, deduplication, containerization, and cloud-based initiatives has been instrumental in solving Room & Board's most pressing business problems over the past 16 years.

At [Room & Board](#), relationships are the foundation of everything we do. That comes through in our furniture and decor—built by American craftspeople we've worked with for years—and our exceptional customer experiences.

Relationships matter behind the scenes, too. We want to work with vendors we can trust, like Pure Storage®. For the past few years, Pure Storage FlashArray™ has helped us take our customer and

employee experiences to new levels.

Our stores are going mobile and high-tech. We replaced our point-of-sale stations with iPads, so design associates can help customers anywhere in the showroom. And we're rolling out 3D virtual showroom software on large-screen displays—a great way for associates to help customers visualize the design of their spaces.

Customers get the same great experience online, and they can schedule consulting sessions, either in-person or virtual. Our recent implementation of Microsoft Teams makes that possible—while enabling employees to work from home as well. We also rolled out a real-time truck routing and tracking system to keep our trucks on schedule. For customers, that means we can promise a two-hour delivery window.

But we didn't always have the confidence to drive this kind of innovation.

A Bake-off Produces Clear Results

Five years ago, we were struggling. Our existing disk array was maxed out, and all our core applications were extremely slow. Running big reports in SAP would bring all our Citrix applications to a standstill, which meant design associates had those dreaded moments of keeping customers waiting during design consultations and checkouts. We knew we needed speed and capacity—and a new vendor would have to earn our trust.

It was time for an old-fashioned bake-off between our existing vendor and Pure Storage. We put the same workload on each array and tested them both heavily for three weeks. And we were ruthless—causing catastrophic failures by removing drives, switching off controllers, and simulating fiber channel disconnects.

The results were eye-opening. It took 90 seconds or less for Pure Storage FlashArray to recover from failures, whereas the other disk array never fully recovered.

On top of that, Pure was with us every step of the way. The Pure support team called us every time we caused a failure, checking to make sure everything was okay. We never heard a word from the other vendor during the bake-off.

We've been running on Pure ever since. In fact, when we needed another array for our failover site, there was really no question who we were going to buy from.

Strong Relationship, Powerful Technology

I used to spend hours every week to keep the disk array running, troubleshooting errors, and keeping applications from overrunning their capacity limits. Now, the team might spend a few hours (or none at all) per month on administration. One time I even forgot my password because I simply don't log in to the Pure 1® storage management console that often. That means we can spend our time on other projects, such as containerizing our website and an order-entry system.

Consolidating our workloads onto two FlashArray devices saves us \$30,000 in annual support costs and \$200,000 in equipment purchases we would have made if we had stuck with spinning disk. Ian Hillier, Room & Board

With Pure Evergreen Storage™, we also get upgraded to the latest-generation controllers every three years—which is equivalent to a brand-new array. What’s not to like about that? Plus, it doesn’t disrupt the business. With our last Evergreen upgrade, we did a complete controller swap on our primary array in a single afternoon with zero downtime. In the past, that would have taken us three months of planning. Now we’re looking forward to doing it again. Code upgrades are also very easy.

For us, it all comes down to the relationship. We know Pure has our back as we drive innovation, and that helps us focus on building relationships with our customers.

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