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*Ken Vandenbark  
 Vice President of IT Operations and  
 Engineering  
 SquareTwo Financial*



## SquareTwo Financial

**INDUSTRY** Finance

**SOLUTIONS** [Business Continuity and Replication, Modular Platform, Storage Management](#)  
**Hardware** — Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2500, Hitachi NAS Platform 3100, powered by BlueArc  
**Software** — Hitachi Dynamic Provisioning, Hitachi Tuning Manager, Hitachi Dynamic Link Manager and Hitachi Storage Navigator Modular 2 software, and Hitachi In-System Replication software bundle  
**Services** — Provided by Hitachi TrueNorth Channel Partner Pomeroy IT

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## SquareTwo Financial Leaps Ahead of Data Growth with Scalable, Intelligent Block and File Storage

SquareTwo Financial is known for its ability to help corporations quickly recover financial assets through a suite of technologically advanced solutions. To keep momentum within its own data centers, SquareTwo Financial implemented Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2500 and Hitachi NAS Platform 3100, powered by BlueArc, for centralized single-pane management of both block and file data.

In a \$40 billion asset recovery management industry, the buying and selling of debt is big business. Helping corporations quickly recover financial assets issued through credit to consumers is the primary focus of SquareTwo Financial.

SquareTwo Financial is a leading player in the debt purchasing industry and is the largest purchaser of fresh debt in the U.S. Since its inception in 1994, the company has purchased more than US\$16 billion in distressed assets, primarily from the largest banks, credit card companies and financial institutions in North America. Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, SquareTwo Financial relies on its unique network of law firm partners and its sophisticated analytics-modeling platform to help clients make their distressed assets whole.

The company specializes in consumer and commercial funding through a variety of state-of-the-art online tools for managing and recovering assets, as well as sensitive self-pay assets for healthcare patients. The bottom line: SquareTwo Financial creates an effective way for more companies and consumers to swiftly resolve their fiscal commitments.

### Resolving Data Center Challenges to Simplify Rampant Growth

As an industry leader using progressive technology to gather, assimilate and analyze client information, SquareTwo Financial wants to ensure that its own data assets will remain safe and accessible.

The company stores and manages millions of case files, with the typical file containing hundreds of records, many of which are scanned documents. Top priorities include being able to rapidly retrieve critical customer data and safeguard stored records from disk failure or data corruption and loss. To comply with regulatory mandates, client data is kept available as historical reference for extended periods of time, often five or six years until the case is closed or the debt is sold.

But with tremendous year-over-year data growth, the existing infrastructure was becoming insufficient and began spawning instability issues. "We had multiple storage platforms and operating systems in our data center, plus a lot of disparate systems that had grown over time and weren't leveraged very well. Some of our SAN products were pushing a decade in use. And the vendor support was not always quick to respond to our needs," says Ken Vandenberg, vice president of IT operations and engineering at SquareTwo Financial.

As a company that considers its commitment to technology a competitive advantage, SquareTwo needed a more modern, centralized and better-supported infrastructure to support the evolving data



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growth. “Exceptional reliability, scalability and performance were paramount to meeting our business requirements. And we were looking for a NAS solution that could provide offsite replication as well as single-pane management for our SAN and storage architecture,” Vandenbark expounds.

### Finding the Right Technology and the Right Solution Partner(s)

At the primary data center, Vandenbark wanted to simplify storage management. “We had to view numerous different screens and maintain several tools just to get a complete picture of the data. That’s not very efficient and it wasn’t easy to support. One tool, one screen was going to be a simpler way to understand our performance and respond proactively to issues,” he explains.

Replication was another area SquareTwo Financial wanted to bolster. Besides its main data center in Colorado, SquareTwo Financial has a secondary location in Illinois, dedicated to providing recovery for major platform data, but not for the customer production data. “We knew that being able to replicate to our secondary site would also increase reliability and business continuity,” Vandenbark continues.

In its quest for the right technology to meet its vigorous objectives, SquareTwo Financial worked with Hitachi TrueNorth Channel Partner Pomeroy IT Solutions to select the right solution for the company’s environment. “Pomeroy provided consulting and integration services and Hitachi offered the proven technology and support that we were seeking in a solutions partner. We buy debt from Fortune 500 companies and help turn assets back to black. Having a partner like Hitachi Data Systems that is aligned with our goals and goes the extra mile is indispensable in our high stakes industry,” he adds.

### Squared Away with a Simplified, Scalable and Reliable Data Environment

SquareTwo Financial implemented intelligent block and file storage to transform its data center into a centrally managed architecture. The environment was enabled with in-system and remote replication, dynamic provisioning and proactive performance monitoring and unified through one interface.

At the primary data center, Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2500 was deployed to support all SAN-connected production databases, file shares, Microsoft Exchange email and business intelligence applications. Configured with an intermix of 100TB of SAS and SATA disks, and Hitachi Tuning Manager for end-to-end visibility into performance, the Adaptable Modular Storage 2500 facilitates high availability and low cost storage options in one footprint. A Hitachi NAS Platform 3100 is also attached to the storage system and was deployed into a clustered environment for the organization’s content and document repository of customer data, as well as file shares for litigation and debt sales applications.

“We set up a similar architecture at our disaster recovery site in Illinois, and because the NAS Platform is integrated with our Hitachi SAN storage, we’re able to reliably and automatically replicate NAS data between locations. From a compliance and litigation perspective, this is huge because it allows us to complete backup or recovery on NAS files faster and easier than ever before. Today, we are able to keep things current within four hours. The move to Hitachi NAS has afforded us defensible peace of mind and terrific efficiency gains,” explains Vandenbark.

### About Pomeroy IT Solutions

Pomeroy IT Solutions is an industry recognized leader in comprehensive technology services, including infrastructure, consulting, procurement and logistics, and IT staffing. The company provides services and solutions to help you maximize your IT investments and achieve competitive advantage. For more information, visit: [www.pomeroy.com](http://www.pomeroy.com).

For storage capacity and just-in-time thin provisioning, SquareTwo Financial takes advantage of Hitachi Dynamic Provisioning to improve application availability and storage utilization rates. “Previously, we had to find the right amount of space, the right configurations, spindles and such. Those deeper levels of involvement are no longer necessary. We can provision a brand new box, with cabling, in less than an hour, and provide systems with high availability, high performance disk in a short amount of time,” he continues.

The Hitachi solution was designed, tested and put into production to meet a quick-turn deadline for implementation. “We saw immediate value with our Hitachi architecture. The systems continue to run smoothly and without intervention, allowing my team time to work on other priorities. Today, we have outstanding performance, scalability and availability. The Hitachi gear just does the job,” Vandenbark concludes.

 **Hitachi Data Systems Corporation**

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