Case Study

Pacific International Marketing

zumasys®

Produce Giant Achieves Sub 30-Minute Disaster Recovery with Veeam Virtual Machine Backup Software

Objective

Implement a single disaster recovery and business continuity plan for its mission-critical applications, including its Oracle-based Famous accounting system.

Solution Details

The solution combines Veeam virtual machine replication/failover software with the FlexPod® converged infrastructure solution from Cisco and NetApp. It also includes a backup NetApp storage system for disaster recovery.

Results

- Increased performance by up to 80%
- Streamlined Famous systems to improve quality of traceability data
- Delivered 24/7 availability for business-critical Famous application
- Achieved 30-minute recovery-time objective
- Simplified backup and disaster recovery

COMPANY PROFILE

Since its inception in 1989, Pacific International Marketing (PIM) has provided the best fresh fruits and vegetables that nature has to offer. Today it is one of the largest produce companies in the country, growing, packing, shipping, and processing more than 100 different products. From its headquarters in Salinas, California, PIM oversees the production of more than 21,000 acres of conventional produce and 4,500 acres of organic produce across California and Arizona.

The Objective

When Bryan Searcy started as Director of Information Technology at PIM in 1998, the company's IT needs were simple. It had numerous RS-232 dumb terminals connected to one Unix-based Famous server, and just about everything else was outsourced. But ten years later, PIM's environment had grown to include dozens of dedicated servers for the company's applications, including Famous, Citrix, and Exchange. Disaster Recovery became a concern that could not be ignored. Searcy was tasked with building an IT infrastructure that leveraged the latest technologies to help the company grow its business and improve data resiliency.

The Solution

In 2008, Searcy partnered with Zumasys to virtualize the company's infrastructure, including its Famous servers, and build a second site on campus for disaster recovery. In 2013, PIM refreshed its technology, working with Zumasys to swap out its NetApp FAS storage systems with a FlexPod converged infrastructure solution, which brings together Cisco UCS blade servers, a NetApp FAS3220 storage cluster, and Cisco Nexus switches into a single, scalable unit. PIM now has two FlexPods with flash-enabled FAS storage.

Performance

Since implementing FlexPod, the performance of PIM's Famous virtual server has gone through the roof, speeding reporting and data access times by up to 80%. On a typical day, PIM's Famous server now averages 8,000 IOPS, which translates to faster access to data for sales and reporting and faster time to revenue.

A New Approach to Disaster Recovery with Veeam

PIM's newest technology expansion comes in the form of virtual machine (VM) backup software from Veeam. Veeam's operational simplicity gives PIM's IT staff the confidence to complete restores and related administration on their own without fear of incorrectly restoring VMs or needing outside support.

With Veeam, PIM can integrate their NetApp Snapshot® copies with Veeam to create efficient and extremely fast backups that are then archived to an offsite location. If needed, VMs can be instantly powered on from the backups. This allows VMs to bypass the restore process in the event of an outage. PIM no longer needs to wait for the VMs to finish restoring before servicing users, which means they can get up and running faster.

"We've got growers, shippers, sales, and accounting accessing our database," says Henry Dill, Sales Manager at PIM. "So it has to be up or they're not working. Nothing is shipping. Nothing is happening. Downtime can get expensive quickly. That's why I'm glad we have our DR solution. While we've never had to prove it in reality, we've been able to test that it can get us back up and running in less than half an hour."

By using a secondary NetApp storage system for archive, PIM can save money by not having to store backups on their more expensive production storage tier. Leveraging NetApp FAS2240 storage systems for long-term archival frees up space on the hot NetApp storage for mission-critical production workloads.

> "What's cool about Zumasys is that I consider them to be my primary partner... We have developed such synergy with everyone at Zumasys—from their management team to the employees that come onsite to work with us. I have peace of mind knowing that they're just a phone call away."
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> – **Bryan Searcy**, Director of IT

Conclusion

With the storage and backup features of NetApp and Veeam, PIM's disaster recovery strategy is no longer dependent on a single vendor. Today, PIM's FlexPod based private cloud has helped the company's two-man IT department manage booming data growth and enable critical business initiatives while lowering costs, improving performance, and providing peace of mind in a disaster situation. Support for PIM's critical Famous accounting system has helped it streamline IT operations and connect users to real-time data, whether they're in the office or in the field. Users now have up-to-the-minute information that they need to make critical decisions about inventory and get products out the door faster.

PIM's savvy use of technology has helped it grow into one of the largest shippers of produce in California. And with help from Zumasys, it will continue to evolve its infrastructure to outpace its competition.