

CommVault Delivers First Class Backup for Largest Flag Maker in the World

QUICK FACTS

Industry/Solution:

- Manufacturing

Platform/File System:

- Windows 200

Applications:

- Active Directory, MS Exchange, SQL Server, SAP Manufacturing Resource Planning, Payroll Software

Partner Hardware:

- 175 Dell desktops
- 15 HP ProLiant and Dell servers
- StorageTek L20 tape library

Challenge:

- Complete backups in available window of time
- Reliable backups
- Fast restores

Competitive Challengers:

- Veritas Backup Exec

Solution:

- CommVault Galaxy Backup & Recovery

Benefits:

- Close integration with Microsoft Windows environment
- Dependable backups completed in available window of time, using fewer tapes
- Fast, easy message level restore in Microsoft Exchange
- Informative reports, simple backup management from a single CommCell screen

Customer Profile

Annin & Co is the world's oldest and largest flag manufacturer. Starting from a sail loft in downtown New York City making signal flags for sailing ships in the 1820's, Annin incorporated in 1847 and has since grown to four manufacturing locations. Annin now has worldwide distribution. As the official flag manufacturer to the United Nations, Annin's international flags are the standards for exactness, followed by the rest of the world. Annin now manufactures over 10,000 different flags and flag accessories.

Information Technology Environment

The goal of the small IT department at Annin & Co. consists of implementing new technology, making sure all systems are up and running, and dealing with all things technical. That includes PC's, printers, servers, switches, Telephones, PBX, Internet, and network connections for the company headquarters in Roseland NJ and the four other manufacturing and distribution facilities (Oaks PA, Coshocton OH, Verona NJ, South Boston VA).

Annin's IT infrastructure includes approximately 175 Dell desktops across all locations and a server farm in Roseland with 15 HP ProLiant and Dell PowerEdge servers. There is also a server in each of the four other facilities, used primarily for data storage and allocation of network addresses using DHCP (Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol). Primary data storage is on internal disks on the servers and several external drive arrays. For secondary storage, Annin utilizes a StorageTek L20 tape library with a single SDLT drive and 19 media slots. They rely on CommVault Galaxy backup and recovery software for backup, archiving, and restores of all the servers.

Move to SAP Drives Changes

"Four years ago, when I first came here, Annin was using Veritas Backup Exec, backing up to DAT tape," recalls Nick Minniti, Director of IT at Annin. "The only systems that were being backed regularly were the payroll system and the email system. The installed hardware and software could not handle everything." However, they knew they would eventually replace their 17-year old MRP (Manufacturing Resource Planning) system. The system was running on proprietary hardware and proprietary software based on BEST AOS. The only way to back it up was with its own proprietary backup system. "When we decided we were going to SAP," says Minniti, "we knew that Backup Exec would not be able to handle the backups without a substantial financial commitment. I had looked at CommVault in the past and have always liked the way that the software was designed. CommVault brought out their Galaxy software in 2001. It looked like an excellent product, and the price tag was right. So we purchased it and have not regretted it since."

Annin is a complete Microsoft shop. Among the most important reasons they selected CommVault Galaxy for backup were its granularity and its compatibility with Microsoft SQL and Microsoft Exchange. "Anybody can do backups," says Minniti. "The issue is restores. How difficult is it to do a restore a complete system or even a piece of data with the software? With Backup Exec, we could not restore SQL or Microsoft Exchange email easily. With CommVault, we can restore one email contact, a single email message, or even a single instance of an SQL database."

Easy Administration with CommVault

CommVault Galaxy management tools have also dramatically reduced the amount of time needed for administration of backups. Explains Minniti, "Galaxy gives us email notifications of any problems, and the views on the management screen are very clean and easy to understand, so it is easy to see everything that's going on." Previously, someone had to constantly maintain the old backup systems. With Galaxy, that time is reduced to five or ten minutes a day. "Even adding new servers to be backed up by Galaxy is very easy", Minniti explains. "You load the CommVault agent on the server, then go into the CommCell management screen, tell it what server you want to include in the backup schedule – SQL, Exchange, whatever – tell it when you want to back up, point and click, and it's done. It takes only a short time to add a new server to the schedule." Galaxy also provides excellent compression ratios. "In the past, backing up all the servers took almost the entire weekend, and now we are backing up all our systems in a matter of hours. We are getting close to 45GB of data being backed up every hour," reports Minniti.

Backing up SAP

When Annin's SAP consultants came in to install the new MRP system, they questioned whether they could back up SAP with CommVault software. Because SAP is SQL based, Minniti was sure they could. To resolve the issue, they ran a test. "The CommVault software worked perfectly," says Minniti, "so of course we back up SAP on CommVault." SAP transaction logs are backed up and truncated by CommVault every few hours, as part of the standard CommVault SQL backup. The software looks for old transactions that are no longer valid and removes them from the transaction log. If that was not done, the transaction logs would get too large and the system would

Backup schedule

Annin backs up all the servers at the Roseland central site over their Local Area Network (LAN) to their StorageTek tape library. Starting on Friday evening, Annin runs a full backup on all servers throughout the weekend and then incremental backups are run throughout the week. The SQL transaction logs are backed up and truncated every hour. All total, Annin backs up over 800 GB of data throughout the week to four SDLT tapes. Archive tapes go off-site every Friday morning. At each remote site, Annin has installed a CommVault media agent on a PC and a standalone DLTape drive for backup. The media agent is controlled from company headquarters, and someone at each remote site is designated to change tapes on the backup tape drive.

"Backup is so important," says Minniti, "because these systems – SAP, email, payroll, – are the life blood of the company. If anything crashes, we are out of business until we get it back up and running. Without the tapes, we obviously can't recover. We do incrementals twice a day, so if we have a crash we can recover up through the last incremental, and lose only half a day's work at most."

Smooth Operations with CommVault

CommVault software has helped Minniti and his busy IT team with more than just reliable backups and restores. "Since I came here in 2001, we have upgraded from PC-class hardware to server class hardware," he explains. "When I got here we had five servers. Now we have 15 servers. With Galaxy, it's easy to swap in a new server, so we use Galaxy to migrate."

Annin first installed CommVault Galaxy software in 2002. "The installation went very smoothly, with no problems," says Minniti. "CIBER came in and assisted us in installing the system and we started doing backups that

night." Post-installation service from CommVault has also been excellent. Says Minniti, "Every time we call CommVault, we get the answer promptly. If no one is available, we get a call back in less than an hour. We even get call backs if we need assistance after hours! If it is a major question – even if it's a dumb question – someone is on the phone right away. The CommVault people are all friendly and knowledgeable." stop responding.

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