

BENSON BOXING CLEVER ON DISASTER RECOVERY



THE CLIENT

Benson box is one of the largest manufacturers of cartons in the UK, operating out of four sites in Leicester, Newcastle upon Tyne, Crewe and Gateshead. The business has grown organically and through acquisition to hit £90M turnover with a focus on hard work, innovation and new technology. With over 250 users on desktops, laptops and handheld devices on the shop floor an IT team of four is headed by IT manager Phil Towersey.

THE CHALLENGE

As the business has grown so management has driven significant changes to its business processes through innovation and modern manufacturing techniques to keep ahead of the competition. This has included the rationalisation of its Enterprise Resource Planning to adopt a solution from Epicor. In partnership with IT infrastructure provider CSA Waverley, this solution has helped to drive the business towards its goals of streamlined manufacturing, increased flexibility and reduced lead times over the last decade.

CSA Waverley has been instrumental in developing the business's IT infrastructure to handle the system, upgrading servers right through to centralising the exchange server.

However, as the business has grown to cover four sites and its technology estate with it, the topical challenge of Disaster Recovery (DR) and business continuity has come to the forefront of management focus. Having supported Benson Box's progressive approach to IT including guidance on a move to cloud computing, CSA Waverley was briefed to look at formalising a DR strategy.

At the time, if the Bardon flagship site went down for whatever reason, then the company's MIS system would be out of order preventing a cascade of operations right across the business.

THE SOLUTION

CSA Waverley proposed an intuitive and creative plan to implement two VM based HP blade servers at the Crewe site to spread load and capacity when needed. With VMWare in place, the IT team unlocked capability to replicate any number of servers from any of the other sites efficiently.

Both servers would be virtualised to facilitate flexibility, interoperability and hosting of multiple applications and platforms as well as provisioning of further backup servers sites very swiftly.

The solution would also bolster existing business continuity as the multi-site replication provided for test, development and provisioning of servers without impact on everyday operations. The team could simply direct users towards whichever server location they were not working on at the time.



THE BENEFITS

Benson Box IT manager, Phil Towersey, said: "We can now guarantee restart within hours rather than days if we have a major issue thanks to tape based site replication. Critically we are getting fail-over we can regularly test, control and manage.

"The VM Ware solution also provides for future progression to a more dynamic recovery using 'double take' functionality to enable server replication to any location quickly. This could see restart reduced to minutes rather than hours.

"Over a five year period the virtualised solution will have delivered 100% ROI. However, the benefits are far greater than fiscal with added functionality that allows us greater resilience, testing, provisioning and piece of mind. Importantly, it reigns in control and responsibility of Disaster Recovery to the Benson Box IT team.

"CSA Waverley has become renowned for appropriate solutions, efficient project ownership and delivery with minimum downtime on transfer. The development and implementation of our concrete DR strategy is yet another example of how Waverley's technical team has become a trusted extension of our own in-house facility.

"The team's support often goes well beyond the call of duty and its helpdesk function is our primary emergency service."

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