

Whalen Furniture Protects Business-Critical Applications with Replay Appliance

Background

California-based Whalen Furniture manufactures and distributes furniture to retailers across the US and in Mexico and China. It's an endeavor that requires crucial business systems - Microsoft Exchange and SQL Server, the Whalen website, warehouse management systems - and their associated data to be constantly accessible. Protecting data and keeping systems up and running falls to Ivan Breit, Systems Administrator. Tape backups were protecting data but Breit knew that if he ever needed to restore data, he'd have to do it "in minutes not hours or days." The need for fast application and data restoration led him to Replay Appliance which delivered even more.

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— Ivan Breit
Systems Administrator,
Whalen Furniture

Tape backup wasn't going to cut it for system restoration

Whalen Furniture, a global company that manufactures furniture and distributes it to retail outlets in the US, Mexico, and China is reliant on business applications including Microsoft Exchange, SQL Server, warehouse management, and other sales and financial systems. "With the sheer number of orders we handle every day and clients that demand steady access to our systems, we need fast backup and restore processes," explains Ivan Breit, Systems Administrator at Whalen Furniture.

Ivan was backing up data to tape but realized that any restoration process would require days of work. He'd need to retrieve tapes, rebuild servers, reinstall software, and then figure out how much data had been lost in the time between the last backup and full restore.

Nightly backups presented performance problems too. "Backups that began at night would sometimes run into the next morning," reports Ivan. "It noticeably slowed down business systems."

Fast application restores with improved system performance

Breit heard about Replay Appliance from a former boss. After a demo of Replay Appliance, Breit decided to roll it out on about 15 servers. "It's extremely easy to implement Replay Appliance," says Ivan. "You take the server down, set preferences and install the software. That takes about 10 minutes. Once that's done, Replay Appliance immediately starts making application backups."



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“We used do nightly backups which means that if I had to restore data, we’d lose a lot of critical work,” explains Ivan. “Now we do backups of data and the entire application every 15 minutes. With Replay Applmage you can get in an insane number of backups if you need to. In 24 hours I get 96 backups of SQL Server and I can restore the whole systems to a virtual or physical server in minutes.”

Not only does Ivan know that application recovery will be fast, his backup processes are no longer degrading system performance. “I have to log in just to see that Replay Applmage is working,” he says. “There’s no noticeable performance hit when backups are running. By eliminating those long daily backups, Replay Applmage has actually improved system performance.”

Achieving Peace of Mind

Since implementing Replay Applmage, Ivan hasn’t had it use it to restore data. He has testing single file restore and found it “really easy.” He mounts files on a virtual server, finds the file he needs, and pushes it back out to the production server. Since he’s virtualized many of Whalen’s servers, Ivan doesn’t worry about bare metal restore.

Ivan plans to virtualize all his servers and is thinking about setting up a virtual environment in a co-location facility. “We could have a wildfire and lose the entire facility but have systems back up in 15 minutes,” he says.

Replay Applmage’s ability to quickly restore data and applications is giving Ivan real peace of mind. “I like to sleep at night,” he says. “I know that if we do ever lose important data or have to recover from a system crash or disaster, we’ll be back up in a reasonable time. I haven’t found anything else like Replay Applmage.”

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