

Apparel Group Backup Looking Good

“Recovery time has been reduced to minutes when previously it took a day.”

COMPANY:

Apparel Group Australia

SOLUTION:

Double-Take Availability was installed to provide continuous server protection and off site backup with various recovery options. It replaced a solution that could not keep up with the data change rate on the Apparel Group network featuring SQL, SAP (SQL Backend) Exchange and an ERP system running on Oracle.

PROVIDER:

Business Continuity Asia Pacific (BCAP), in partnership with Dell, the Apparel Group preferred supplier, installed and configured Double-Take Software the world-class recovery software solution. Dell provided the hardware and also installed the Double-Take licences.

BACKGROUND:

Apparel Group is one of Australia’s leading clothing design and manufacturing companies, and home to iconic women and men’s clothing brands Sportscraft and Saba. It also has a private label division that provides design and manufacturing services for leading national retailers.

An Australian textile and manufacturing success story, the Apparel Group was founded in the 1950’s. Today, it is owned and operated by its senior management with headquarters in Sydney and offices in Shanghai and Hong Kong. It employs 900 people, and sources textiles and accessories from around the world.

To be successful in the relentlessly competitive fashion industry, the Apparel Group needs constant access to information across its businesses. With operations spanning separate countries, season, time zones, language and cultures, data backup and recovery systems are critical requirements. Apparel Group uses application servers across its operations. It relies on this network backbone to facilitate communications, tasks, and business needs. In addition to its manufacturing management, these servers assist in maintaining stock

levels and meeting changing retail demands. These servers are critical to the business and require a high level of up time to meet stringent business objectives mainly, a low recovery point objective (RPO) and recovery time objective (RTO).

However, the Apparel Group was currently using a data recovery solution that had to be rebooted every 24 hours. “It was a nightmare,” says Jeff Vella, Infrastructure Services Manager at Apparel Group. “A software limitation required the application to reboot itself every 24 hours and due to the initial replication not completing in the day, every time it rebooted, the replication had to start from scratch, resulting with the data not being protected.”

“It lead to countless hoursweeks of lost time that could never be recovered. It was placing a risk on the entire operations of the business,” he said.

The problem for Apparel Group was that the recovery application could not keep up with changes on the Apparel Group network, which featured highly transactional based apps including SQL, SAP (SQL Backend) Exchange and an ERP system running on Oracle.

Jeff Vella says the core problem was that for practical purposes, the recovery application they had originally deployed was using a ‘point in time’ snapshot technology, which was not suited to the Apparel Group’s transactional based application workloads.

“Apparel Group uses a network comprising two physical, and five virtual production servers replicating to a data recovery site one-to-one,” he said. Following a comparative review, the Apparel Group turned to Business Continuity Asia Pacific (BCAP) and its Double-Take Availability solution, which could replicate application servers over an existing link. Double-Take Availability conducts real-time, full-server replication, which protects OS, application and data files to another server, allowing the user to effectively recover data on demand in the case of a server failure or data loss. It is typically one-to-one, and allows the user to be back up and running in about 30 minutes and less in many cases. The Double-Take solution provides businesses with continuous full-server protection enabling users to protect not only data and applications but also the operating system and application files.

BCAP provided assistance with installation, support and three days of training.

With the Apparel Group's servers now in synch, and data protected, Jeff completed full data recovery tests for the Exchange and SQL servers.

“It all worked well. We were very happy with the outcomes. We failed over the production servers to our remote DR site and then failed back to production. Everything went to plan,” he said.

“The Double-Take solution works well,” says Jeff Vella. “It does what it is supposed to do - protects our application servers in real time and it is easy to deploy, maintain and carry out the all important DR tests. We have found Double-Take's on-going operating costs to be low and the BCAP technical support has been first-rate.”

He said the Apparel Group now had a sufficient DR Plan and solution in place to protect its critical servers and save time. “Recovery time has been reduced to minutes when previously it took a day,” he said. “We have less stress, easier recovery, and a more robust network. Double-Take Availability is meeting all of our back-up and recovery needs now and for the foreseeable future”.