

CASE STUDY

Preventing Backup Failures through Better Management

Fortune 20 Global Financial Company Gets End-to-End Data Protection

An explosion of data and complex backup infrastructure was coming close to derailing the data protection strategy of a global financial services company. More than 33,000 servers and 26 petabytes of data were being backed up per day resulting in nearly 4 million backup jobs per month. Then, as it is now, the company was required to prove to auditors and regulators that their systems truly were protected and could be recovered in case of data loss. Failed processes had to be reported, analyzed, and shown to be resolved in a timely manner.

Unfortunately, the global financial services company lacked the visibility it needed to enforce its data protection policies and prove to regulators that the company was in compliance. Audits required that millions of data points be collected and failed backups were nearly impossible to analyze requiring administrators to sift through spreadsheets of data to determine what exactly had caused the failure. There was simply too much volume that had to be backed up and dozens of administrators and internal auditors were required to handle the report generation and workload at great cost to the organization.

At the same time, the company had plans to strengthen its data protection strategy by migrating to a new EMC® Data Domain® backup solution. Clients would continue to be backed up locally by Symantec™ NetBackup™, but then the data would be replicated to Data Domain in a separate data center and then moved to physical tape in an off-site disaster recovery facility. The extra copies would ensure data could be restored more easily and quickly in case of loss and would be kept for the required time determined by regulators.

However, the team that set up the new infrastructure was having trouble with capacity planning and was unable to accurately predict how many tapes were needed and which ones were nearing capacity. Over provisioning was rampant leading the company to spend more on backup hardware than was required.

“We had just out-grown our data protection strategy and were spending millions of dollars more than we probably should,” a senior executive with the company said. “We needed to streamline the backup process and get a better handle on capacity planning.”

Customer:

Financial Services Company

APTARE Solution:

APTARE StorageConsole Backup Manager

Technology Environment

Storage: NetApp®

Backup Solution: EMC® Data Domain®, IBM Tivoli® Storage Manager (TSM), Symantec™ NetBackup™

Amount of Data:

26 Petabytes backed up daily

“I was completely blown away by the way APTARE eliminates all the tedious data collection and administration associated with backup reporting and compliance. Now technicians are spending time analyzing our backup infrastructure and creating additional operational efficiencies while improving data protection.”

*Senior Executive,
Financial Services Company*



Key Challenges

- Ensure backup policies for more than 33,000 servers distributed in 24 global data centers
- Lack of visibility into failed backup processes
- Collect millions of distinct data points for compliance reporting

Business Results and Technical Benefits

- Reduce backup volume by 16 percent resulting in a \$3 million delayed buy in a single data center
- Consolidate eight Data Domain drives to just 4 or 6 in each of the 24 data centers saving millions of dollars across the organization
- A complete, consistent viewpoint into the backup status of the global business unit environments
- Ensure all infrastructure is in compliance with internal backup policies

Building Transparency Throughout the Backup Process

The global financial services company put out an extensive RFP and investigated several backup reporting tools eventually settling on a solution from APTARE based on the software's ability to provide end-to-end data protection visibility. Immediately, backup administrators had complete visibility throughout the entire backup process that stretches through Symantec, IBM, NetApp and Data Domain solutions and infrastructures, allowing them to monitor progress, identify, and remediate failed cycles, as well as to meet compliance and auditing requirements.

Within weeks of deploying APTARE StorageConsole Backup Manager, the company was able to identify thousands of clients that were not meeting backup policies and put processes in place to bring the systems back into compliance. While some systems that had been out of commission for months were still erroneously getting backed up, others were being backed up too often (daily instead of weekly) or backed up redundantly by separate tools. The APTARE solution brought these issues to light so administrators could resolve the inconsistencies and drastically reduce backup volume.

On a continuing basis, the increased visibility allows administrators to better understand why backup failures are occurring at a granular level—many of which are outside the scope of the administrators' responsibilities. The software client could have been out of date, NetBackup could have put a cycle on hold, or a machine could have been decommissioned. Instead of being blamed for failed backups, administrators could identify the root cause issue and take steps to correct it.

Data Extensibility Leads to Rich, Actionable Reports

The financial services company is able to use the APTARE solution to run a series of reports that help with capacity and infrastructure planning. Previously, capacity planning required administrators to sift through giant spreadsheets with more than 33,000 rows and hundreds of columns. Now, APTARE StorageConsole Backup Manager automatically collects backup data in real time and stores it in a flexible and searchable database. Searching for a specific data point—a certain server or failed cycle—is quick and easy. Running a full report takes less than two hours—a process that used to take three full days.

Reports are generated weekly and monthly through APTARE software and shared with various stakeholders throughout the organization via Microsoft® SharePoint®. A support technician can then access the reports to check backup status while resolving a helpdesk issue; and, if not resolved by the end of a shift, seamlessly hand off the ticket to the next technician who may be based on another continent. The reports are also accessible to line managers who need to make informed capacity and infrastructure decisions based on updated, accurate information. Previously, managers would have had to pull someone away from another task to run the necessary reports.

Transparency Leads to an Enhanced Data Protection Strategy

The visibility, central reporting, and data extensibility of APTARE solutions give administrators a complete and consistent understanding of the backup environment across the entire organization. As a result, the financial services company has a better handle on its data protection strategy, has reduced costs, and is able to make informed backup policy and capacity decisions that impact the business.

By eliminating redundant and unnecessary backups, the financial services company was able to reduce backup volume by 16 percent in a single data center resulting in a \$3 million delayed buy for 12 months. Costs will continue to shrink as the company's other 24 data centers are analyzed and the backup cycles cleaned up. The company was also able to consolidate its Data Domain infrastructure from eight drives to four or six in each data center saving thousands of dollars per data center with the potential to save the company millions of dollars more.

Why APTARE?

- Demonstrated end-to-end data protection visibility
- Able to collect backup data from multiple storage vendors
- Centralized backup reporting and compliance



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