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M&N Insurance rejects tape backup in favour of increased reliability and speed

ISSUES:

M&N Insurance Service Ltd, a London-based full range insurance brokerage, had identified a problem with their existing disaster recovery strategy. A migration of their filing systems and business critical processes to an entirely digitised format created a situation where a disruptive event that impacted their servers would result in office work grinding to a standstill.

In addition to their insurance services, M&N is also an independent financial advisor. Due to the sensitivity of customer data collated and the nature of its work, this makes M&N subject to regular audits, predominantly to ensure compliance with FCA regulations regarding the suitable storage and security of its clients' information. M&N therefore required a disaster recovery solution that would not only provide the practical assurance of an off-site back-up, but that could also satisfy FCA demands concerning the appropriate storage of customer data.

SOLUTION:

Disaster recovery tests revealed that their existing recovery strategy left the company without access to their systems for an extended period of time, potentially days. Also that tape recovery could lose up to a full day of customer information if the failure occurred at the least auspicious time. Therefore, a Business Continuity and DR solution needed to be found that would both



recover all customer data and simultaneously ensure ongoing compliance with Financial Services Authority (FCA) regulations.

Before implementing DataFort's Core Care solution, M&N was backing up its digitised files with a traditional tape strategy. This proved to be an unnecessarily complex and wholly unreliable process. Individuals were tasked with replacing tapes every day and storing them offsite, though the data on the tapes would inevitably be at least 24 hours out of date and there was limited confidence that any recovery of the data stored on the tapes would be successful.

RESULTS:

In contrast, the Core Care service offers data stored on RAIDed backup appliances held both in the M&N office and enterprise class data centres. Multiple points of storage on the self verifying Core Care service offers more reliability than traditional tape recovery methods. The service is based on complete backup of the entire server with continuous updates throughout the business day. The service creates read-only ar-

chives in a way that replicates a tape strategy, making available end of days for 5 days, end of weeks for 5 weeks and end of months snapshots for a full 7 years (which meets FCA guidelines.) And then improves upon a tape strategy by providing recovery of any 15 minute point over the last two business days. This gives the ability to retrace steps from corrupted databases or restore files changed in error during the business day. The service also manages the immediate backup of the business' emails, furthering its recovery capabilities and adding an additional element of timeliness and accuracy to M&N's disaster recovery plans.

Leonard Ormonde, Director of M&N Insurance Service Ltd, comments, "With such a vast amount of data on our electronic filing system, and an absolute reliance upon it, we wanted to be sure that should our server fail, we would be able to be up and running within a day, with all of our client data still intact. DataFort's Core Care is a fixed price service that offers us the confidence of both on-site and off-site data replication, and that reassures ourselves, customers

and auditors alike of the security and safety of our information storage."

Ormonde concludes, "DataFort was recommended to us by our outsourced IT department. Having used DataFort extensively for backup services for other clients previously, they were certain that the Core Care system would suit our business needs. After a highly successful proof of concept process, we are now able to take advantage of the very latest technology, normally accessible only to those with enterprise-scale budgets, and also receive a far more flexible and personalised customer service – a crucial addition that gives DataFort a competitive edge."

DATAFORT Managed IT Services

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