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Sigma helps Broadway Bank earn faster, easy-to-manage data backups with EMC Avamar

Broadway Bank, a multi-billion dollar financial services organization, has prospered even as the economy and banking industry have struggled. With the tagline, "We're here for good," the San Antonio, Texas-based bank has successfully grown its customer base and array of financial products.

"Our business expansion has caused our IT infrastructure to grow rapidly," says Bill Meek, Senior Vice President and Information Systems Manager. "In only three years, our server population has grown over 300 percent and we have virtualized approximately 60 percent of our server infrastructure with VMware."

As data accumulated rapidly, the bank's reliance on four different tape backup solutions was making it more difficult to ensure comprehensive data protection.

"One of our biggest challenges was managing many different backup environments," says Meek. "Because daily incremental backups could take eight hours or longer, we'd have to overlap our backups or we'd run into business hours...It was difficult to manage, and we were having trouble keeping up with our backups as our data kept growing."

Solutions

After evaluating available options, Broadway Bank consolidated its tape-based solutions, including Symantec Backup EXEC software on EMC Avamar backup and recovery software, with integrated global data deduplication, to solve their current and anticipated backup requirements. The bank uses Avamar to perform fast, daily, full agent based backups for physical and VMware virtualized servers across their 38 branch offices, a primary data center and a secondary data center. All data is backed up to Avamar Data Store systems at the primary data center, which are replicated to the bank's disaster recovery site for additional protection.

Unlike traditional backup methods, Avamar deduplicates backup data at the source so that only new, unique sub-file data segments are transferred during daily dull backups and stored to disk. Avamar also deduplicates data globally, across virtual and physical environments to reduce the required backed disk storage by up to 50 times.

Applications protected by Avamar include check imaging, teller management, loan processing, data warehousing, as well as Microsoft SQL databases, Exchange e-mail, Dynamics CRM and SharePoint. Application data and VMware virtual machines are stored on an EMC CLARiiON CX3 storage area network (SAN), which included a gateway to EMC Celerra network-attached storage (NAS). Broadway Bank also uses an Avamar NDMP Accelerator node to back up Celerra, which store documents, spreadsheets, presentations and other files for the bank's approximately 650 employees. In total, Avamar protects 10 terabytes of data for Broadway Bank.

"Our experience working with our local EMC reseller, Sigma Solution,s was very positive," adds Meek. "They understood our challenges and backup objectives, and were able to propose a best-in-class solution that fit the bill. We are very satisfied with our partnership with their organization."

Keeping Pace with Business Growth

With increased IT flexibility and reliability provided by Avamar and VMware server virtualization, Broadway Bank has kept pace with business growth, while focusing on customer satisfaction and product quality.

"When we used to use tape backup systems, our daily incremental backups and weekly full backups would take many hours to complete," says Meek. "With Avamar, we get daily full backups in less than an hour

across our existing network links with 99.7 percent daily data reduction. Restore quality and speed also improved."

Avamar was especially successful within Broadway Bank's growing VMware environment.

"VMware has been essential in keeping up with our business growth," says Mr. Meek. "We have approximately 60 percent of our servers virtualized now, but when we rolled it out, we knew our previous backup solution wasn't going to keep up. We brought Avamar in because of its integration with VMware, and the backup and restore performance has been outstanding."

"We have a single, centrally managed solution for backing everything in our physical and virtual environments – from small branch servers, to file shares, to large databases and replicating it all to another site," says Bill Rigsby, Vice President and Senior Systems Engineer. "Avamar is a very versatile, comprehensive solution."

Streamlined Backup Management

"The solution also addressed our need for superior data security," says Meek. "Our data is much more secure. We no longer have to worry about tapes getting misplaced. Our management and auditors love that we've moved in this direction."

The bank is spending significantly less time managing backups since Avamar was deployed.

"Avamar is a set it and forget it solution," says Rigsby. "We used to spend 20 to 30 hours weekly babysitting backup jobs, replacing tapes, restarting failed jobs and so on. Now, it is five minutes a day. We're also now tapeless, so our tape expense has gone away. The overall savings have been huge."