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"We were scratching our heads, wondering how we were going to do backups. Then we thought: 'Let's back up the snapshots generated by FalconStor CDP – that'll do it.' And it does."

– Francis Rodrigues, IT Support Manager, Radley & Co

Radley + Co

Luxury retailer solves backup and DR issues with FalconStor CDP

Background

Radley + Co is a market leader in handbag and accessory design. Its products are designed in the UK, manufactured largely in China and on the Indian sub-continent, and distributed to retail outlets from its UK and US warehouses.

Challenge

As a company with an international supply chain and retail outlets, a large amount of data is generated by orders. Order data is fed to the order-processing system to create lists for the warehouses; the RFID-enabled warehouse subsequently picks and dispatches orders, providing confirmation back to the order-processing system. In addition to orders triggered by the retail stores, individual orders from a hosted e-commerce site also come to the head office, where they enter the order-processing system. The data associated with the manufacturing side of the business stems from these orders. The company uses Microsoft SQL and Pervasive SQL databases to structure all of this data.

Meanwhile, other systems used for the day-to-day operations also create important data — payroll, email communications, and so on — along with files from departments such as marketing. The result: lots of data, in many different formats, across multiple sites.

According to Francis Rodrigues, IT Support Manager, the company's disaster recovery (DR) provisioning consisted primarily of backing up to tape. "We would restore from tape, and pick up as best we could. We knew that this wasn't really sufficient, and when as an exercise we stress-tested our procedures against various hypothetical scenarios, it was obvious that using backup tapes for DR was no longer adequate." Recovery was time-consuming, required the involvement of expensive consultants, and involved a loss of operations and data.

FalconStor Solution

Rodrigues describes the process he and his team followed to find the right solution: "We spoke to people – colleagues, peers, and consultants – and we searched the web; after this we created a long list of potential solution providers. But upon closer examination we found that many of their solutions were modular and didn't do everything we needed, or they did everything but were highly complex."



Industry

Retail/Consumer Products

Company Profile

Radley + Co is a market leader in handbag and accessory design, with operations in several countries across the globe.

IT Environment

- > VMware ESX Server
- > Multiple databases including Microsoft SQL Server and Pervasive SQL
- > Microsoft SQL Server

Challenges

- > Protect against data loss and business downtime
- > Meet a shrinking backup window caused by almost 'round the clock' international operations

FalconStor Solution

- > FalconStor® Continuous Data Protector (CDP) Appliances
- > HyperTrac™ Backup Accelerator

Benefits

- > Provides rapid data recovery to any good point in time
- > Ensures continuous business operations in event of data loss
- > Eliminates the backup window

FalconStor was also on this list. "When I first looked at FalconStor some years ago, it was the 'Rolls Royce' of solution providers, and we assumed the products might still be out of our league in terms of budget," he begins. "But FalconStor solutions now come in turnkey appliances that are easy to install and use. This made it very appealing, so we took a closer look. We were given a demo of the FalconStor® Continuous Data Protector (CDP) solution, and saw exactly what we wanted to see: full recovery, without requiring someone of uncommon genius to administer it. And then something unexpected happened – we realized that we could easily afford it."

FalconStor CDP combines local and remote data protection into a cost-effective, unified, disk-based backup and DR solution. It enables data to be recovered back to the most recent transaction, shrinking recovery point objectives (RPO) to mere seconds. Using sophisticated technologies including application integration, physical-to-virtual (P2V) recovery, and WAN-optimized replication, FalconStor CDP enables businesses to come back online quickly; entire systems can be restored in minutes. Data is protected in its native format, and is instantly accessible. Recovery time objectives (RTO) can change from hours to minutes, minimizing downtime and consequent economic impact.

The primary aim was to replicate data from the data center in London to a remote warehouse location that also serves as a DR site. "Our London infrastructure is almost entirely virtualized on VMware ESX Server, so we achieve this by deploying a DiskSafe™ agent on each virtualized server," Rodrigues explains. DiskSafe technology from FalconStor synchronizes data back to the FalconStor CDP appliance, which in turn replicates to the DR site over a leased line. Snapshots are taken every three hours, which is more than sufficient for the company: "We keep each snapshot for a week – so we can roll back, in three-hour intervals, to up to a week before any disaster occurred or was discovered."

While this straightforward deployment enabled the Radley & Co to meet its DR project objectives, the use of FalconStor technology does not stop there. The company uses the HyperTrac™ Backup Accelerator to archive data onto tape. HyperTrac works in conjunction with FalconStor CDP to increase

tape backup speed, eliminate backup windows, and offload processing from application servers. Data can be backed up at any time without disruption, even during peak production hours, making it ideal for organizations requiring tape backup for archiving or regulatory compliance.

Business Benefits

"Although Radley + Co has always been a growing company, in the past we had a sizeable window available in which to do our backups," says Rodrigues. However, once the business expanded into the USA, the company's systems were put to use for far longer periods of time, reducing the backup window to the point where it was almost non-existent. "We were scratching our heads wondering how we were going to do backups. Then we thought: 'Let's back up the snapshots generated by FalconStor CDP– that'll do it.' And it does." HyperTrac technology makes this possible.

In addition, the solution is non-disruptive. Rodrigues says: "Most people internally don't even know that the solution is there. But in the IT department, we're very happy that it is installed and doing what it does. It gives us a sense of safety." He adds, "The business benefit is clear: we have protected the business against failure caused by data loss, however that data loss might occur."

Radley + Co's original goal was to get a 'halfway house' solution – half automated and half manual. Instead, the company ended up with a full DR solution that also solved its backup issues. "We got a superior system to what we expected to get, within our budget."

Future Plans

"Our next step is to scrap tape backup completely," says Rodrigues. "We will do so by leveraging TimeMark images generated by FalconStor CDP as backup restore points and replicating them offsite. This way, we don't need to transport backup tapes."

Over time, Rodrigues and his team have capitalized on the range of capabilities that FalconStor CDP offers: unified backup and DR, with the added benefit of removing the hassle of tape management. "It has been a genuine evolution, as we realize the full potential of the solution that we have."