US SIGNAL

CUSTOMER STORY

US Based, Multi-Company Business

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer:
Manufacturing

Location:
Over 30 offices and warehouses

Industry:
Multi-business enterprise

Business Challenges

+ Develop and Implement a DR solution that offers geographic diversity, fits within tight budget parameters and meets specific RPOs/RTOs
+ Incorporate existing hardware into the DR solution
+ Free up internal IT staff from on-site data center and DR management

US Signal Solution

+ Public Cloud
+ Disaster Recovery-as-a-Service with continuous data protection
+ Colocation with intra-data center connectivity
+ MPLS connection and burstable Internet port
+ Third-party equipment hosting

Business Results

+ Comprehensive solution that provides for full replication of the client company's production environment and that meets tight RPOs/RTOs
+ On-going savings resulting form not having to manage on-site data centers or DR Solution

Business Challenges

The client company is a multi-business enterprise with seven operating divisions, and distributes a wide variety of products and services from 30 North American offices and warehouses. With its business operations focused on a diverse range of products, supply chain services and logistics, the company relies heavily on data. If a disaster were to take out its primary data center, the results would be catastrophic. To avoid that scenario, the company solicited proposals from leading IT service providers for a disaster recovery (DR) solution. One was US Signal.

Like many companies interested in DR, this one wanted a solution that met its RTO and RPO requirements and fit within its stringent budget parameters. Unlike most companies, however, it wasn't as interested in converting capital expenses to operational expenses as it was in a solution that could accommodate its existing hardware. At the time, its production environment consisted of virtual machines (VMs) on a VMware platform with a core business application running on IBM iSeries servers. That application could not be moved to an x86 virtual environment.

In addition, the company had a Wide Area Network (WAN) consisting of MPLS with both Sprint and AT&T for connectivity from its primary data center to its remote locations. Palo Alto firewalls were used to protect the connection to the internet, along with Cisco DMVPN for scalable IPsec VPN. The company also no longer wanted to manage its on-site data centers, adding more complexity to its desired solution.

The US Signal Solution

Initially, US Signal responded to the client company's RFP with a solution that met its stated criteria and objectives. When meeting directly with company representatives, however, the US Signal team took the opportunity to learn more about the organization's business goals and technical challenges. Based on that information, the team proposed a different approach that could meet the client company's needs more efficiently and effectively.

Compute, memory and storage resources within the US Signal cloud to host virtual instances of the Palo Alto firewall platform that the client company uses to terminate internet connectivity within its production environment. This provides for easier management and transition as opposed to using an unfamiliar firewall platform. It offers a production-ready, highly available environment that can serve as a "recovery landing pad" when needed. Because it's the same environment that all production workloads are served by, the desired performance and protection are assured when workloads are failed over to the US Signal cloud.

Compute, memory, storage and Microsoft OS licensing within the US Signal cloud to host copies of the client company's Active Directory Domains. This provides "best practice" protection for Active Directory by having live standby domain controllers in the recovery environment instead of replicating a source domain controller to a target environment.

Continuous data protection for the VMs within the client company's production environment, leveraging the Zerto engine within US Signal's Disaster Recover as a Service (DRaaS) offering. This entails managing the ongoing replication of approximately 260 VMs, landing on over 60 TBs of storage within the US Signal cloud with journaled recovery points in time.

An IBM iSeries server for which the client company manages the operating system and technology required to replicate from the source IBM server to the IBM server in the DR environment. An equipment lease arrangement now allows for OpEx on the hardware and software instead of CapEx. The IBM component is also accounted for in the DR playbook.

Space, power, cooling and intra-data center connectivity in a US Signal colocation facility that allows the client company to converge its Sprint and AT&T production WANs with the DR networks, along with a 1Gbps MPLS connection for the client company's headquarters location to a US Signal colocation facility. This facilitates a highly secure data transport medium via MPLS private networks.

A 100M burstable Internet port at the US Signal colocation facility that provides Internet connectivity to the DR environment as well as customer-managed WAN routers to support DMVPN capabilities. This provides for instantly bursting up to 1Gb of bandwidth when needed.

With this solution, the client company's primary server environment's data, applications, and operating systems are continuously replicated to a diverse, secure virtual data center. If a disaster occurs, a fully replicated instance of the company's protected environment can be deployed with the click of a button. The recovery process is tested and vetted at least twice per year to ensure a successful process, and replication operations are monitored 24/7/365 to ensure the SLAs are met.

Dedicated managed services engineers have fully documented DR playbooks for the DRaaS solution, which encompasses both the granular detail of the environment as well the required recovery steps. The entire solution is fully managed by US Signal, freeing up the client company's IT staff for other endeavors.

Business Results

According to US Signal's key contacts at the client company, US Signal exceeded the company's expectations by being far more technically advanced in its approach than the other RFP respondents. By providing the necessary compute, memory, storage, licensing, network connectivity, and orchestration, and the service umbrellas required to fail over and run the client company's production workloads, the US Signal solution can meet the client company's required RPO of 13 seconds. The SLA is unique in that it covers the actual time required to recover the designated servers rather just the time between data syncing. Because the solution also provides for a minimum of two DR tests a year and a DR playbook, the client company enjoys greater peace of mind that the solution will perform as expected if a disaster were to strike.

Pleased with both the solution and support provided, the client company has since procured additional resources from US Signal.

ABOUT US SIGNAL

US Signal is a leading data center provider, offering connectivity, cloud hosting, data protection, and disaster recovery services — all powered by its wholly owned and operated, robust fiber network. US Signal also helps customers optimize their IT resources through the provision of managed and professional services.

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