

Hospitality Leader Santa Cruz Seaside Company Eliminated Bumpy Rides from their Backup and Recovery Infrastructure

Industry: Entertainment & Hospitality

Use Cases: Data Protection, Disaster Recovery

Solution Partners: Microsoft Azure, VMware



“ Cohesity addressed our biggest backup and recovery concerns by providing fast, resilient and reliable enterprise data protection for our growing company. We have tight windows in the hospitality industry, and Cohesity was able to perform a complete backup in one third of the time of our previous solution. Cohesity’s capabilities, such as native integration with Microsoft Azure, have been a huge bonus for our overall operation and application development.

- Brian Critchlow, IT Systems Administrator, Santa Cruz Seaside Company

Introduction

The Santa Cruz Seaside Company has been making people scream, laugh, and create memories for more than a century. The family-owned company operates the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk amusement park in Santa Cruz, California. Touted as the “Coney Island of the West” when it opened in 1907, the iconic seaside amusement park now welcomes over 3 million visitors every year.

In addition to the Boardwalk, the company manages additional properties including Carousel Beach Inn, Sea & Sand Inn, the Boardwalk’s Coconut Grove event space, and Boardwalk Bowl, as well as many real estate investments and business partnerships throughout Santa Cruz County. The company is the fifth largest employer in the city of Santa Cruz, hiring up to 1800 employees during high season.

Challenges

With the goal to modernize their IT infrastructure, the Santa Cruz Seaside Company team began to take a look at their existing secondary data infrastructure, including their backup and recovery environment, and evaluate ways to leverage the elasticity and economics of the public cloud.

In the legacy world, backups were especially painful. It not only took seven to nine hours to complete a full nightly backup, but at times had to start the backup job from scratch in case the application timed-out or stopped responding. Due to the transactional nature of their business, this was no longer sustainable. Additionally, the company needed an enterprise-class disaster recovery solution, to ensure business continuity. The IT team operated in very tight non-production hours since many of their businesses and operations are open until 2 a.m. Due to slow and clunky legacy backup solutions, the backup jobs would bleed into the operational hours, causing a lot of issues once a snapshot was released, and often triggering the SQL servers to disconnect completely.

After VMware announced EOL for vSphere Data Protection last year, Santa Cruz Seaside Company started a conversation about finding a modern data protection replacement. They were looking for the following capabilities in their next solution:

- Simplify the backup and recovery environment to meet RTO and RPO without affecting production servers during the day
- Implement a secondary tier to offload data to the cloud with protection for sensitive data to protect HIPAA and PCI information

- Provide software-defined solution with SQL awareness and VMware backups on single pane of glass
- Enable disaster recovery and regional disaster contingency with native cloud integration

Solution

After quickly ruling out solutions from Infracore and Unitrends and moving toward a policy-based solution with simplified manageability, the company evaluated Cohesity and Rubrik. Cohesity was chosen based on a simple user interface, and the superior capabilities like, in an event of a disaster, restoring to the primary or a standalone cluster. The disaster recovery capabilities were a tremendous asset and bonus over their existing solution.

For ease of deployment, Santa Cruz Seaside Company chose Cohesity C2000 hyperconverged appliance powered by Cohesity's software-defined DataPlatform and DataProtect to modernize their backup and recovery environment. As a web-scale platform, Cohesity allowed Santa Cruz Seaside Company's IT team to start small and grow their Cohesity cluster to address future business needs. Cohesity's native integration with Microsoft Azure enables easy data mobility, cloud based long-term retention and disaster recovery.

Results

Today, the data center has been significantly simplified, eliminating multiple point solutions to just one. The company has made leaps and bounds from several years ago, first moving many operations to the cloud including the adoption of Microsoft OneDrive for all employee workstations. The single pane of glass with Cohesity allows the company to manage their on-prem and cloud infrastructure easily.

Additional benefits with Cohesity included the discovery that the encryption built in to the company's POS software will encrypt again in Cohesity, protecting valuable user data, and providing a tool that the IT team hopes to take advantage of down the road. The company can also test applications and conduct disaster recovery testing without disruption, which was not possible with the previous infrastructure.

"One of our departments recently lost all employee performance review files and the IT team immediately received a triple ticket to try to avert a crisis," explains Critchlow. "With Cohesity, we were able to easily search and restore our data within a few minutes. We simply were not able to respond and recover our data that quickly in our previous environment, and Cohesity continues to amaze us with its resiliency, speed and reliability. Where previous tasks took half a day, we can now complete an entire backup in about three hours."

Santa Cruz Seaside Company has achieved the following results with Cohesity:

- Secondary data now tiered to the cloud for long-term retention
- Data protection is achieved without affecting production during business hours with zero impact on SQL servers
- A huge bonus with Cohesity is the IT team can do data cloning without disruption to the primary database
- Instant VM recovery
- Cloning a data warehouse of over 1TB takes approximately one minute to boot up, and IT can be querying the database within two minutes

Recap

While the Boardwalk's roller coasters might be bumpy, getting a reliable data protection solution has not been a wild ride. Santa Cruz Seaside Company is taking advantage of Cohesity's modern, web-scale data protection solution that spans from private to public, without disruption to customers or production.