

Nominee: Symphony Group

Nomination title: Symphony Group Reduces RPOs from Hours to Seconds with Silver Peak's VRX software

Symphony Group, the UK's largest privately owned manufacturer of fitted kitchen, bedroom and bathroom furniture, selected data networking and mobilisation Specialist, Silver Peak, to improve the performance of offsite data replication and accelerate the transfer of large volumes of data between the company's headquarters in Barnsley and its remote data centre more than 100 miles away in Warwick. The project enabled quick and efficient replication of data over long distance, thus reducing the company's recovery point to just 20 seconds.

For Symphony Group, it is absolutely critical to its business operations that it is able to replicate data between its sites in a timely fashion. However, with the company's headquarters and remote data centre more than 100 miles apart from each other, the geographical distance between the two locations meant that the company began to experience network performance issues.

Prior to deploying Silver Peak, Symphony Group carried out a data centre refresh, which enabled it to asynchronously replicate all of its data to the disaster recovery (DR) site – however this was essentially the grain of sand that tipped the scale. Using Veeam and IBM XIV storage, the company quickly found that the data mobility between the sites was being limited by the 100 megabit-per-second (Mbps) network bandwidth allowance, making it increasingly difficult for the company to meet its recovery point objective (RPOs). Symphony Group's IT department was unable to move all of the data and achieve the RPO that was required. What's more, the process was putting huge strain on the company's day to day business operations.

With budget constraints in mind, Symphony Group required an affordable solution that would allow the company to meet its RPOs without needing to re-architect its existing network. Having tried and tested WAN optimisation in the past, the company chose to deploy the Silver Peak's velocity replication acceleration (VRX) software, which was purpose-built for storage and could scale to over 1 gigabit-per-second (Gbps) connections.

A particularly important aspect of the project was that Silver Peak's VRX software was able to seamlessly fit into the company's replication environment, and with its ability to run on all standard hypervisors – including VMware, vSphere, Microsoft Hyper-V, Citrix XenServer and KVM – it was able to do just that. Indeed, the software easily integrated with the company's existing IBM XIV and Veeam backup software. As well as this, the solution was budget-friendly and the company made full use of Silver Peak's flexible subscription pricing model.

Reaping the rewards

Silver Peak's VRX software took less than 20 minutes to deploy without touching the network, which put the power to increase replication performance into the hands of the storage professional. Since the deployment, Symphony Group has eliminated distance limitations and has been able to easily meet its stringent RPOs. By using real-time techniques, primarily at the network (IP) layer, the company has been able to deliver maximum throughput over the WAN and overcome common bandwidth, distance and quality challenges.

Most notably, Symphony Group is now able to replicate 110 gigabytes (GB) of data per hour between the two sites with no performance issues. It is able to use its existing 100 Mbps connection more efficiently and the connection between the sites has effectively become 150Mbps. As a result, its RPOs have significantly reduced from around 24 hours to just 20 seconds. This means that Symphony Group can deliver a recovery point within seconds or minutes – the ideal amount of time for an advanced manufacturer.

What's more, the company has benefited from lower disaster recover (DR) costs by avoiding a re-architecture of its network that would have meant tearing down the entire infrastructure; a process that would have been extremely costly as it would have required an upfront financial cost.

Hitting goals

Symphony Group has enjoyed significant operational benefits since implementing Silver Peak's VRX software. In particular, the company's IT department can easily recover systems

within a fixed period of time – prior to the Silver Peak deployment this was almost impossible.

Following the success of the deployment, Symphony Group has been able to replicate large amounts of data every hour between the two sites with no performance issues. This enables the company to recover data quicker without going down the usual route of purchasing more bandwidth – something businesses often do despite the fact other issues also play a role, for example, latency and network quality.

WAN optimisation technology has subsequently helped the company maximise its existing infrastructure in order to meet previously unattainable data replication targets. Going forward, Symphony Group continues to take full advantage of the flexible pricing model, enabling it to keep exceeding expectations and drive its business forward without breaking its strict budget.

Why nominee should win

Symphony Group has met five business initiatives:

- Maximise WAN throughput – 110 GB of data can be replicated per hour between both sites with no performance issues
- Replicate data timely – with 100 miles between them, Symphony Group can replicate data between both sites quicker
- Integrate with existing storage technologies – Symphony Group can integrate Silver Peak's VRX software with both Veeam and IBM XIV
- Meet RPOs – the company has reduced its RPO from 24 hours to 20 seconds
- Lower DR costs – Silver Peak's subscription pricing model has created lower DR costs and avoided a WAN bandwidth upgrade