



## Argix Direct Consolidates Backup and Recovery with EMC to Reduce Risk and Costs

Comprehensive EMC Solution Slashes Backup Time, Delivers Better Data Protection for SQL Server and Exchange

### BUSINESS VALUE HIGHLIGHTS

#### ENVIRONMENT SNAPSHOT

- **EMC Software:** EMC® RepliStor®, EMC NetWorker™, and EMC EmailXtender®
- **Primary Applications:** SQL Server 2005 databases for route optimization and shipping data; Microsoft Exchange 2003 e-mail.
- **Storage Infrastructure:** EMC CLARiiON® CX300 storage with Fibre Channel and ATA disks.
- **Processing Environment:** IBM Netfinity servers running Microsoft Windows Server 2000.

**Profile:** Argix Direct is wholly focused on providing retailer customers with scheduled, consolidated, and efficient deliveries to stores. The company uses state-of-the-art carton labeling and routing facilities, sophisticated tracking systems, and a comprehensive national delivery network to deliver more than 38 million cartons per year to more than 5,800 retail stores across the United States.

**Challenge:** With four regional sort centers, Argix needed a more efficient and reliable way to back up critical business data than the direct, network-based tape backup solution it had been using. The company wanted to consolidate backup and recovery for its remote distribution centers and better protect its critical SQL Server shipment data and Exchange e-mail.

**Business value:** The EMC solution for Exchange and SQL, featuring RepliStor, NetWorker, and EmailXtender software and EMC storage, enabled Argix to:

- Reduce time to backup shipment data generated by the distribution centers from hours to minutes;
- Replicate data to the central site, automating backup-to-disk and backup-to-tape, freeing staff for more strategic work;
- Shorten restore time from hours to seconds;
- Archive e-mail from production storage, decreasing e-mail backup windows from 10 hours to two hours.

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## EMC Solution Adds Peace of Mind for Argix

Argix Direct is a leading logistics services provider to retailers, operating four retail distribution centers in New Jersey, New England, and California. Each center is tasked with sorting multiple shipments of merchandise into single-store deliveries nationwide. Rapid and 24x7 access to shipment information and e-mail is critical to Argix's ability to ensure timely and reliable deliveries. Previously, Argix backed up its shipment data from the remote sort centers across a wide area network, as well as local e-mail onto tape using Veritas BackupExec. These processes, however, were time consuming and did not provide the level of protection the company desired.

“RepliStor is ideal for our environment because it works with any Windows server and any type of storage, providing us with tremendous openness and flexibility, while reducing the time and effort required for backup. It used to take hours to back up everything from the remote sites, but now, with the replication going on in the background, it's as if there's no time involved at all. Now, we can back up to disk in minutes.”

**Nino Silvano, Chief Information Officer, Argix Direct**

To address these issues, Argix implemented EMC CLARiiON storage with EMC software—EMC RepliStor, EMC NetWorker, and EMC EmailXtender—to deliver a comprehensive EMC consolidation and protection solution for Microsoft SQL Server 2005 and Microsoft Exchange 2003. With this solution, SQL Server-based shipment information is replicated from each remote location to the data center at the company's headquarters in Jamesburg, New Jersey. In addition, Argix archives local Exchange data to reduce the size of its production Exchange environment. Then, both SQL and Exchange data are backed up to EMC disk storage and tape automatically. As a result, Argix has reduced backup windows dramatically, improved network bandwidth utilization, and enabled very rapid restore of critical data.

Nino Silvano, CIO of Argix, said, “Information is critical at every stage of the distribution process—whether it's facilitating the next step in the shipping route or providing customers with an up-to-the-minute status on their pending deliveries. With EMC, we have a solid and centralized backup and archiving solution that provides the level of data protection we need, while allowing our business to run more efficiently. Because the EMC software consolidates and automates the replication and backup processes for all our distributed facilities, there's far less drain on our limited IT staff. And we have the added peace of mind that we can completely restore our data in a matter of hours rather than days.”

## Time to Back Up Remote Sites Cut from Hours to Minutes

The EMC solution for Argix consists of EMC RepliStor software, used to replicate Microsoft SQL Server data from IBM Netfinity servers in each remote location to a central Netfinity server and EMC CLARiiON Fibre Channel disk in the headquarters data center. The SQL Server data being replicated consists primarily of shipping details for each carton the company handles. To protect these important records, Argix backs up this data to EMC CLARiiON ATA storage, and then from ATA disk onto tape using EMC NetWorker software for both processes.

“With RepliStor, I have a continuous trickle of data flowing from all our sort facilities to our main data center,” said Silvano. “RepliStor is ideal for our environment because it works with any Windows server and any type of storage, providing us with tremendous openness and flexibility, while reducing the time and effort required for backup. It used

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to take hours to back up everything from the remote sites, but now, with the replication going on in the background, it's as if there's no time involved at all. Now, we can back up to disk in minutes. We use bandwidth throttling so the replication won't use more than four kilobytes of bandwidth. So, we no longer have that problem of backing up over the wires and putting a drag on our communications. RepliStor allows us to back up our remote sites as though they were right here in the local data center." As the data is fed into Argix's central server and stored on the CLARiiON storage area network (SAN), EMC NetWorker software automatically initiates the backup-to-disk process once per day based on the schedule Argix has set.

"It was easy to set up a schedule in NetWorker to automatically back up to disk every day, and then clone to tape for offsite storage. So, we have the best of both worlds. With RepliStor and NetWorker, we now have a reliable and efficient backup strategy that has reduced our risk significantly."

**Nino Silvano, Chief Information Officer, Argix Direct**

"The real beauty of backing up to disk is that if we need to quickly restore anything, it's easy to find and takes just a couple of clicks to get it back into production. There's no need to search for the correct tape cartridge and then mount it and run the restore. Restoring from tape can take hours and involve significant staff resources. Now, with backup to disk, restores are practically instantaneous.

"If you have a total site loss, it's still good to have tape," added Silvano. "It was easy to set up a schedule in NetWorker to automatically back up to disk every day, and then clone to tape for offsite storage. So, we have the best of both worlds. With RepliStor and NetWorker, we now have a reliable and efficient backup strategy that has reduced our risk significantly."

Argix also took advantage of EMC Services to ensure an efficient implementation. Silvano explained, "With a small IT staff, we were looking to receive knowledge transfer and installation help—so we didn't end up taking two weeks on something that could be done in two days. EMC brought in two consultants who helped us get up and running very quickly, and provided us with the knowledge transfer our staff needed to manage the environment."

## **Exchange Backup Windows Shrink by 80 Percent**

Argix has extended the efficiency and protection achieved in its SQL environment to its Exchange 2003 e-mail environment as well. Previously, Argix backed up all of its Exchange data from internal SCSI disk to tape using Veritas BackupExec, a process that took an entire day.

Now, the company uses EMC EmailXtender to archive Exchange e-mail from CLARiiON Fibre Channel disk to CLARiiON ATA disk for long-term retention. Archiving reduces the amount of production Exchange data requiring backup, while enabling rapid access to archived files if needed. Production Exchange data is first backed up to separate ATA disk, and then to tape as part of the EMC NetWorker job schedule. With this powerful solution, the company has slashed backup windows for Exchange by 80 percent.

"We used to back up approximately 270 gigabytes of Exchange e-mail, which was taking more than 10 hours to complete," reported Silvano. "Now, by archiving any e-mails more than 30 days old onto the CLARiiON, we've reduced our active Exchange store to just 60 gigabytes. Combined with backup-to-disk, we've shrunk the backup window to about two hours. That frees up a lot of time that we can put into adding value to the business, rather than just spending it on administration."

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## Getting a Total Customer Experience with EMC

For a company with facilities distributed across the country, ensuring reliable and efficient backup of business data can be a challenge. By consolidating its backup processes using RepliStor, NetWorker, and EmailXtender, Argix has met that challenge head on—resulting in more efficient and effective data protection, while reducing the demands on a limited staff.

“You can’t underestimate the importance of backup and recovery—regardless of the size of your business,” declared Silvano. “If you run into a problem and can’t get your data back, it’s devastating. With EMC software and storage, I’m confident that all the data—whether it’s from one of our sort centers or our central data center—is well protected. We now have a legitimate backup and disaster recovery plan that works.

“Much of what gives me confidence is working with EMC for this solution,” concluded Silvano. “EMC demonstrated a real commitment to addressing our needs, with more personal attention than I’ve seen from other vendors. There are other vendors that offer similar capabilities, but they couldn’t provide the same kind of help that EMC can to deliver a complete solution. Also, the fact that I have one vendor to rely on for both my storage and backup software simplifies my life. I can stay focused on more strategic issues, knowing that my data is in good hands. In the end, EMC brought all the pieces together and solved my problem.

“It’s the relationship that EMC brings to the table that really provides the added value for Argix. I feel like they’re working toward a common goal—to make sure that I’m happy and get what I need. That’s a very powerful way to do business.”



**EMC Corporation**  
Hopkinton  
Massachusetts  
01748-9103  
1-508-435-1000  
In North America 1-866-464-7381

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Customer Profile

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