

MUZAK HOLDINGS

EMC support services help media company protect valuable media assets



ESSENTIALS

Challenges

- Protect and manage business-critical data and valuable digital assets
- Keep pace with data growth
- Help roll out new technologies

Solutions

- EMC Global Services responsive telephone, online, and onsite customer support services
- Leverage broad and deep expertise in virtualization technologies

Results

- Fast, expert response to problems
- Convenient online Live Chat and Support Forum services provide fast answers from EMC specialists
- Field engineers provide timely professional services onsite to help maintain environment and resolve issues

For more than 75 years, Muzak has been the background music in people's lives—in offices, retail stores, hotel lobbies, gyms, restaurants, and elevators.

Today, services from Muzak Holdings LLC reach more than 100 million people every day. In addition to broadcasting music programs to subscribers and developing custom music programs for individual clients, the company acquires, designs, and distributes rich media of all kinds for its customers.

"We are a media company that develops custom music, voice-on-hold, advertisements, digital signage, radio spots, and other business solutions," says Paul Mace, storage systems specialist.

DIGITAL ASSETS

Muzak's IT organization is responsible for managing the data Muzak Holdings needs to run its business, which includes revenue-generating digital libraries of music, audio, video, images, and multimedia.

About 180 terabytes of data reside on networked EMC® CLARiiON® CX-4 480 arrays, with 120 terabytes of data archived on EMC Centera® systems. Muzak uses EMC NetWorker® software to help simplify and automate backup and recovery operations and provide continuous data protection and continuous replication with EMC RecoverPoint/SE software.

One of the challenges Muzak faces is being able to expand quickly to accommodate data growth. "Our data has been growing about 15 percent per year," Mace says.

While some growth comes from normal business operations, most is driven by the acquisition of new digital multimedia assets. For example, since 1997, Muzak Holdings has been using original artists as a music source. "We're always ingesting new music," says Mace. "When we acquire another license from a music company, we need to bring its whole catalog into our system and set it up with the metadata that we use." The company's new digital signage business is also bringing in and generating large files of high-definition video content.

ROLLING OUT NEW TECHNOLOGY

In addition to managing growth in the storage environment, Muzak's IT organization is responsible for helping the company roll out and adapt to new technologies, which have long played a role in the evolution of the Muzak business model. In the 1930s, for example, Muzak relied primarily on manually operated record players to deliver its services. Today, the Muzak Holdings IT organization is working on shifting much of the program delivery from satellite broadcast channels to IP networks.

The IT department has aggressively pursued IT service efficiency and agility through virtualization. The company's server environment is about 90-percent virtualized, with close to 170 virtual machines.

The IT department is also considering EMC Atmos® cloud storage for information policy-based management of unstructured content. "We're exploring the feasibility of moving to Atmos as a faster and less expensive way for us to expand our storage when we need it," says Mace.

"EMC has broad and deep storage and information management expertise in virtualized environments. They are always able to address issues with our VMware environment and help us to find a fast resolution. The quality of EMC support is a key reason why we selected EMC technologies over other vendors' solutions."

PAUL MACE
STORAGE SYSTEMS SPECIALIST

BACK UP FOR A TEAM OF ONE

In some ways, the biggest challenge Mace faces is being a storage management team of one. "I'm the only one running storage in our IT organization," says Mace. "So when I have a question or there's a problem, the quality of technical support I can depend on is critical."

Support is a key reason why Muzak Holdings selected EMC technologies. "EMC has extensive storage and information management expertise in virtualized environments. They've always been able to address issues with our VMware® environment and help us to find a fast resolution," notes Mace.

One thing that stands out for him was an incident that caused a loss of access to a significant number of LUNs. "The problem was affecting our VMware systems," says Mace. "We were able to get the issue escalated quickly to EMC engineering and get an exact answer as to what had happened and how to resolve it. It was resolved so quickly because the EMC engineers understand the technology across the stack—not just the EMC hardware."

For most issues, Mace opens a case online because there's often information he wants to include or add as an attachment. For technical questions and low severity issues, however, he also uses EMC Live Chat and EMC Support Forum services. "EMC Live Chat is convenient and has knowledgeable support engineers," says Mace.

KNOWLEDGEABLE PROFESSIONALS

“When onsite support is necessary, EMC local field service has also been consistently good,” Mace comments. “Every time we’ve needed onsite support, the EMC field engineers have been here exactly when they said they would be. In my experience, the knowledge and professionalism of every single EMC support engineer I’ve worked with has been well above that of other companies. They always have the answer or have been able to get it very quickly and they always provide an update before they leave explaining what was wrong and what they did to fix it.”

Mace concludes, “Across the board, EMC support services have been fantastic. EMC is always there when we need them. I can call in, open a ticket online, or research solutions using their online support tools. Whatever I choose, I know there are people there who are going to help me. I can’t remember a time when I didn’t get the answer I needed. I really value the consistency and dependability EMC support provides.”

CONTACT US

To learn more about how EMC products, services, and solutions can help solve your business and IT challenges, contact your local representative or authorized reseller, or visit us at www.EMC.com.

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