

PBI/GORDON CORPORATION

EMC VSPEX Proven Infrastructure provides a path to disaster recovery



ESSENTIALS

Industry

Manufacturing

Company Size

290

Business Challenges

- Disparate server and storage environment was difficult and time-consuming to manage
- Environment was not ideal to plan a DR strategy around

Solutions

- EMC VSPEX Proven Infrastructure
- EMC Data Domain
- VMware vSphere
- Cisco UCS Blades

OVERVIEW

Headquartered in Kansas City, MO, 100 percent employee-owned PBI/Gordon Corporation is a national leader in the professional turf and ornamental management industry. The company also develops and markets products for the consumer lawn, garden, and farm and ranch markets, as well as animal health and grooming in the consumer and veterinary markets.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Karla Ledom, IT Manager at PBI/Gordon, had been tasked with creating a disaster recovery (DR) plan for PBI/Gordon. The company was using a range of physical servers with direct-attached storage varying in age from one to ten years. The disparate storage was difficult and time-consuming for the company's limited IT staff resources to manage—and was also difficult to plan a DR strategy around.

PBI/Gordon turned to EMC Premier Partner Alexander Open Systems (AOS) for help. PBI/Gordon had long relied on AOS for IT infrastructure support.

"We have dealt with AOS almost since the time it was formed," says Ledom. "From our initial meeting and through many years, AOS has been trustworthy and intent on providing the best solution for companies like ours."

AOS recommended that PBI/Gordon implement an EMC® VSPEX™ Proven Infrastructure, which included EMC VNX® unified storage, Cisco UCS blades, and VMware® vSphere™. EMC Data Domain® was recommended for deduplication backup and recovery.

SOLUTIONS

PBI/Gordon deployed VSPEX at its primary site. VSPEX protects five TB of data, including file and mail server data. The company has already virtualized mail and file servers, and plans to virtualize 75 percent of its environment in the near future. The implementation of VSPEX went smoothly.

"The implementation was easy because the AOS engineers did it for us! They were wonderful. It is working very well for us," Ledom says.

Creighton Hill, the AOS Account Manager for PBI/Gordon, says, "It makes logical sense to pair these technologies up. They work well together in a small footprint and are very flexible. Customers aren't tied down and they aren't left wondering if they have made the right decision."



CUSTOMER PROFILE

EMC²

Results

- Provided scalable cloud infrastructure
- Dramatically improved DR capabilities
- Reduced time required to build servers from several days to hours
- Enabled easy management

PBI/Gordon also deployed two Data Domain systems—one at the main datacenter and the other at a nearby facility. In the past, the company's only DR plan was storing tapes at an offsite facility—now it has data replicated offsite that can be easily restored.

BUSINESS AGILITY, EASY MANAGEMENT

PBI/Gordon has begun to virtualize its data center with VSPEX. Virtualization enables the company to be more agile and has eased management.

The previous distributed environment was time-consuming and difficult to manage. But with VSPEX, managing the environment and creating virtual machines (VMs) using the provided templates is easy.

"VSPEX cuts down the time it takes to build a server and that is important because we don't have a lot of time to deal with servers to begin with," states Ledom. "Now we are talking a matter of hours instead of several days worth of time to build a server. That is a step in the right direction of making our IT team more efficient and agile."

"AOS took us from a complete hardware environment to a virtualized environment in about three weeks from start to finish. It is a testament to how well VSPEX systems work together."

Karla Ledom
IT Manager at PBI/Gordon

MOVING TOWARD DISASTER RECOVERY

With VSPEX, PBI/Gordon has advanced towards its goal of disaster recovery.

"At least we are in first gear moving toward a complete DR framework and soon we will be able to shift into second gear," explains Ledom. "Now we have data sitting in a location that can accommodate a rebuild in case we lose the prime location. Ultimately, with VSPEX we will replicate the live production system offsite. With virtualization, it becomes much easier to replicate that data center in another location if you have a disaster," Ledom observes.

The issue of availability is critical to PBI/Gordon, Ledom says. "It is devastating not to ship orders to our customers when they are expecting them or to be unable to communicate in a timely manner."

Ledom is excited about the new VSPEX implementation and is looking forward to developing its full capabilities. "I obviously don't want a disaster but I feel more comfortable now that VSPEX is in place," she says.

Ledom offers the following advice about virtualizing with VSPEX to her fellow IT managers at other companies. "Go for it now. Don't wait. I wish we would have done it long ago."

As for selling virtualization to upper management she advises: "When I put the need in terms of DR, then selling it became a lot easier."

When it comes to implementation, Ledom knows that having the right partner and technology is crucial.

"AOS took us from a complete hardware environment to a virtualized environment in about three weeks from start to finish. That was a very successful project given we had no experience doing it. It would have taken us about three months to do it on our own. It is a testament to how well VSPEX systems work together," she says.

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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