

Case Study



QUICK FACTS

Industry/Solution:

- Managed Services Provider

Challenges:

- Seamless integration of data management software with Amazon Web Services was needed to support new cloud-based DR service
- Legacy platforms required the addition of complex scripting or a gateway appliance to connect to the cloud, which was cumbersome, expensive and difficult to manage
- Unified platform with integrated functionality and centralized management was required to simplify the movement, protection, and archiving of all types of data stored in the cloud
- The availability of embedded deduplication and encryption was demanded in order to lower storage-related costs while ensuring the highest levels of data security

Solution:

- CommVault Simpana 9 software with capacity licensing model and deduplication, DASH copy, encryption, Virtual Server Agent, SnapProtect, archive, and replication.

Benefits:

- CommVault's integrated cloud connector enabled IT-Lifeline to efficiently and securely move data into the Amazon cloud to support BLACKCLOUD Edge without any scripting or gateway appliances
- Simpana software can scale to meet the demands of a fast-growing service, which is expected to double the MSP's business over the next two years
- The ability to deploy embedded, source-side deduplication and encryption has enabled a decrease in the MSP's storage footprint while offering heightened security
- CommVault's next-generation virtual server protection and SnapProtect technology enables protection of the most demanding virtual server environments
- CommVault's capacity licensing model enables adding new functionality, including archive, replication and DASH copy, as customers' needs dictate

IT-Lifeline Leverages CommVault's Single-Platform Integration with Amazon Web Services to Deliver Cloud-Based Disaster Recovery Services

Customer Profile

IT-Lifeline is a leading-edge business recovery service provider with a full range of technology continuity solutions designed to meet the unique needs of small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs). Located in Eastern Washington, IT-Lifeline operates a workplace technology recovery hub that delivers various levels of redundancy, ranging from real-time business continuity services of all or priority operations to backup and recovery of mission-critical data and applications.

For nearly a decade, IT-Lifeline has served heavily regulated businesses, including banks, credit unions, insurance companies, financial services firms, hospitals and government agencies. Most recently, the progressive service provider announced an innovative cloud-based disaster recovery service, called BLACKCLOUD® Edge, which is a secure, scalable disaster recovery (DR) cloud built on top of Amazon Web Services (AWS).

According to Matthew Gerber, CEO for IT-Lifeline, the new service offers customers up to 50 percent savings over traditional DR as they only pay for disaster recovery capacity when needed instead of having to buy equipment or capacity for periodic testing. "With BLACKCLOUD Edge, we provide vaulting and recovery for the cloud generation," he explains. "By taking advantage of the scalable cloud infrastructure

from AWS and CommVault's market-leading Simpana data and information management software, we can transform how mid-sized organizations buy, deploy and use IT disaster recovery services. As our fastest growing service, we fully expect BLACKCLOUD Edge to double the size of our business within the next two years."

Data Management Environment

As a managed services provider, IT-Lifeline has built advanced technology infrastructure and facilities to ensure secure, cost-effective data vaulting and fast recovery from system failure, human error or nature- and manmade adversity. A 20-person team of certified IT experts, developers and engineers oversee operations while meeting recovery Service Level Agreements (SLAs), ranging from four to 24 hours for full restoration of critical systems.

IT-Lifeline also addresses its customers' growing mix of physical and virtual environments as many have hybrid models where they have virtualized much, but not all, of their IT infrastructure. In fact, IT-Lifeline expects that most of its customers will maintain hybrid environments for the next five or more years, which the company can support with both public and private cloud services. IT-Lifeline then can recover virtual environments using CommVault and AWS while restoring physical servers at the company's recovery hub.

In addition to offering flexible recovery options, IT-Lifeline works closely with customers to accommodate industry-specific regulations for data security and recovery, including those set forth by FDIC and FFIEC in the banking industry and NCUA in the credit union segment. "Many of our customers must comply with very stringent compliance and security requirements when it comes to protecting and recovering their data," Gerber says. "When the rest of our customers see how our offerings satisfy the strictest demands of the financial community, they're confident in our ability to support them."

BLACKCLOUD Edge also delivers compliance with SAS70 Type II, ISO 27001 Certification and Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) Level 1 Service Provider.

"Data security is the big issue in migrating customers to the cloud," Gerber says. "We allay concerns by explaining the levels of compliance AWS has achieved along with CommVault's ability to encrypt all the data stored in the cloud. We absolutely lower mid-market barriers of entry to the cloud as the first company to offer this level of enterprise-class DR."

Extending Data Management to the Cloud

When IT-Lifeline set out to develop BLACKCLOUD Edge, the company had a series of essential requirements, including the ability to protect, manage and recover data across both physical and cloud-based storage from a single console. "We wanted to simplify the movement, protection, and archiving of all types of data stored in the cloud," says Eric Thompson, solutions architect

for IT-Lifeline. "Equally important was the availability of source-side deduplication and encryption to reduce data management costs while ensuring the highest levels of security for all data delivery and recovery."

At IT-Lifeline's workplace technology recovery hub, IBM Tivoli Storage Manager (TSM) is used to safeguard data as part of an overall managed backup and recovery service. When it came to the next-generation cloud offering, however, IBM TSM didn't meet all selection criteria. With TSM, deduplication or encryption could be performed, but not both.

Additionally, IT-Lifeline was seeking a transparent way to extend data to the cloud and TSM required additional scripting or a gateway appliance. "We didn't want multiple products with more moving parts that would further complicate the process," notes Thompson. "Rather, we wanted a single, scalable solution that would be simple to deploy and manage as well as grow easily to support hundreds of customers and petabytes of data."

Seamless Integration with AWS

IT-Lifeline conducts best-of-breed product reviews each year, so the team took the opportunity to compare TSM to other platforms, including Symantec NetBackup and CommVault Simpana software. As part of its overall evaluation, each product was put through its paces using pseudo-production data. The team also reviewed the competitive landscape and was impressed with CommVault's leadership spot in Gartner's coveted enterprise backup and recovery Magic Quadrant report.

After months of hands-on testing and evaluation, the decision to deploy Simpana software was unanimous. "It was clear that CommVault technology was more cloud-ready than its competitors," says Gerber. "CommVault has a more forward-looking cloud vision with its Simpana software cloud connector, which provided an easier, better and faster way to bring our new service to market. CommVault also has a fabulous presence in the mid-market, which means they really know best how to service this customer segment."

CommVault takes full advantage of native REST over HTTP connectivity to Amazon S3 Application Programming Interface (API) to extend the unified data and information management capabilities of Simpana software to the cloud. "For our customers, Simpana software was a logical choice," adds Gerber. "When we looked at all the business benefits of working with CommVault, it was almost a no brainer to go in that direction."

CommVault + AWS = Industry-Leading DR

In facilitating delivery of its new BLACKCLOUD Edge service, IT-Lifeline uses CommVault's integrated cloud connector to efficiently and securely move data into the Amazon cloud. "With CommVault, it's as easy as choosing the AWS storage target from a drop-down menu, entering the account info and Simpana software handles the rest," explains Thompson. "This seamless integration is key from an implementation and support perspective."

Overall, IT-Lifeline has found an easier learning curve with CommVault when compared to its legacy solution and applauds Simpana software's singular platform and centralized management console. "As a service provider, we want to keep our administrative costs low and pass those savings to our customers," says Thompson. "CommVault, along with AWS, offers more features and functionality in a cohesive solution that will give us the ability to scale in ways we couldn't before."

IT-Lifeline also appreciates the ability to deploy both embedded source-side deduplication and encryption. The CommVault combination enables IT-Lifeline to further lower storage-related costs by reducing the data footprint before it is sent over the network and stored in the cloud. Additionally, CommVault's FIPS-certified encryption functionality secures data in-flight or at rest within the storage cloud. "CommVault does something very few companies can by offering source-side dedupe and encryption together," Thompson continues. "IBM, for instance, does one or the other but not both."

Another plus is CommVault's next-generation virtual server protection, which features tight integration with VMware and vCloud Director as well as the ability to support thousands of virtual machines and integrate with array-based snapshots. "VM-level backup and recovery is a big one for us," Thompson adds. "We particularly like the concept of CommVault's SnapProtect technology, which will help us protect the most demanding virtual and physical server environments."

Thanks to CommVault's capacity licensing model, IT-Lifeline also can easily add a host of new capabilities as their customers' needs dictate, including archive, and replication. Furthermore, the ease of restoring individual objects, whole volumes or entire applications enables IT-Lifeline to meet the most demanding recovery requirements while innovative capabilities, including Dedupe Accelerated Streaming Hash (DASH) copies, will help the team efficiently and cost-effectively make additional copies for recovery.

Over the years, IT-Lifeline has built its own reporting engine to handle chargebacks as TSM lacked a real reporting function. With CommVault, however, the team now can take full

advantage of integrated reporting to eliminate the ad-hoc system and move reporting under the Simpana umbrella. Integrated reporting, combined with role-based access control and charge-back capabilities, further streamlines administration while facilitating faster time to revenue. "Technologically, Simpana software is the best fit for our BLACKCLOUD Edge service and it's the best fit for our customers," Thompson notes. "Simpana is the best of both worlds—it will enable us to grow and scale as an MSP and technically, it's the right approach for our customers."

IT-Lifeline also appreciates the benefits of being a member of CommVault's Service Provider program, which gives IT-Lifeline access to local support and implementation assistance to drive the delivery of managed data protection services. "With CommVault, we have access to sales and support tools that enable us to do a better job of servicing our customers," concludes Gerber. "In picking our technology partners, we picked two leaders in their respective markets: Building a new recovery service with these market leaders will keep us out front."



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