

ratiopharm Discovers a Cure for Slow, Unreliable Backups and Restores

QUICK FACTS

Industry/Solution:

- Pharmaceuticals

Platform/File System:

- Windows NT/2000/2003

Applications:

- Oracle, Exchange, SQL

Partner Hardware:

Dell:

- Dell Powervault 132T library with two LTO drives and 24 media cartridges. The library is connected to a backup server. All the servers are tied into the backup server via a Dell Powerconnect switch 5224 switch. All laptops, desktops and servers are Dell.

Challenge:

- Develop from scratch an integrated enterprise backup solution; complete backups in the available window of time.

Competitive Challengers:

- Legato
- Veritas Backup Exec

Solution:

- CommVault Galaxy Backup & Recovery

Benefits:

- Backups are trouble free
- Restores are fast and reliable
- Backups are completed well within available windows
- Galaxy reporting capability provides "reports configured for what you want to know"
- Web-based system management allows fast, simple backup management from anywhere; "on the first screen you see everything you want to know"

Customer Profile

From the moment a brand-name pharmaceutical product goes on sale, pharmaceutical companies can start the process of researching and developing a generic version. The generic product can only be sold the day the patent runs out and if it has been approved by the appropriate authority (the FDA in the United States or the TPP (Therapeutic Product Programme) in Canada). With a network of major wholesalers and more than 50 warehouses across the country, ratiopharm markets a wide range of pharmaceutical products all over Canada, including generic versions of widely-used drugs, such as Prozac and Ritalin, many less well known pharmaceuticals, and over-the-counter products.

Ratiopharm was formed in 2000, when ratiopharm GmbH, Europe's largest generic drug company, purchased Technilab Pharma, a 28 year-old Canadian generic pharmaceuticals company. Ratiopharm has two divisions in Canada: ratiopharm operations and ratiopharm Canada. Ratiopharm operations is located in Mirabel, Quebec, a Montreal suburb, and provides manufacturing, distribution, research and development, quality assurance, and finance functions. Ratiopharm Canada is in Mississauga, Ontario, a suburb of Toronto, and is the company's sales, marketing and business development arm.

Data Management Environment

The Information Systems department for both divisions of the company is centralized at ratiopharm operations in Mirabel. The IS mission is to provide reliable service to all their users within the company, and to make sure all systems are running all the time, with no glitches. Major applications include e-mail, file and print, and database support. All applications must be up and running 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The IS team includes 10 people in Mirabel and one in Mississauga. Users total over 300, including 200 in Mirabel, 50 in Mississauga, and 50 on the road. Laptops, desktops, and servers are all Dell hardware, and operating systems are Windows NT, Windows 2000 and 2003 on the servers, and Windows 2000 on the workstations.

The enterprise communications center for both divisions is in Mirabel, where they have an Ethernet Local Area Network (LAN) running at 100 megabits per second (Mbps). Mississauga is connected to Mirabel over an ATM (Asynchronous Transfer Mode) high speed connection (10 megabytes per second (MBps)) and a T1 line for Internet communication. Sales representatives on the road dial into the system remotely over the Internet, using a Virtual Private Network (VPN) with high speed connections.

Backup Storage Environment

Backup storage infrastructure includes a Dell Powervault 132T library with two LTO drives and 24 media cartridges. The library is connected to a backup server. All the servers are tied into the backup server via a Dell Powerconnect switch 5224 switch. Each server has two network cards; one for the corporate communications network, and one for the independent backup network. Every day, CommVault Galaxy software backs up all of ratiopharm's Windows servers, including file servers, anti-virus server, SQL server, Oracle server, Microsoft Exchange e-mail server, and file and print servers.

Backup Routine

The IS team runs incremental backups on the file and print servers daily, and weekly and monthly full backups. For the database servers, they do full backups every day, and also weekly and monthly full backups. "Depending on which server is being backed up," explains IS Project Manager Frantz Landry, "we back up first to disk, then to tape, or direct to tape. The Oracle database is 30 GB and is backed up direct to tape, which takes about 3.5 hours. The SQL database is 17.5 GB and is backed up direct to tape in 4 hours. The file and print server is 70 GB and is backed up first to disk, which takes 2.5 hours. We have only two tape drives in the library, so they can't do all the backups direct to tape in the available window of time. So we spread the load out among the resources."

"We are adding new servers this year," says Landry, "and new applications, including SAP. Our assumption is that the volume of data to be backed up will grow; we are just not sure exactly how. That will mean that backups will take longer, and possibly exceed the available

backup window of time. We will start using the Galaxy Synthetic Full Backup functionality then."

Choosing CommVault

CommVault Galaxy was installed at ratiopharm at the beginning of 2003. Previously, they used NT Backup, the native Windows NT backup command, for most of the servers, and Veritas Backup Exec for the MExchange servers.

"Every server had its own attached backup device," explains Landry, "and the process was not easy to manage. Every morning something was wrong with at least one of them. We'd have 'tape full,' or 'backup did not work,' or 'backup suspended,' or something. NT Backup was very slow. We looked at a number of enterprise solutions, including Veritas, Legato, and CommVault. Legato was UNIX-based, very UNIX-centric, and not user friendly. We didn't like it at all. So it was down to CommVault and Veritas. Veritas Backup Exec was good for backup, but some things were missing. The reports were not easy to configure the way you wanted them, and they were not easy for users to interpret. You want reports configured for what you want to know. CommVault gives us that.

"With Veritas, you can't get all the management information you want, all at one point," continues Landry. "You had to do each server separately. You had to go into menus and find the tape you were looking for. With Galaxy, on the first screen you see everything you want to know: what tape is running, what drive is free, what's full. It's all in one place, and you don't need to look at a lot of different menus. The reporting capability was key for why we selected Galaxy."

The ratiopharm team also liked the ease of use of the CommVault software, versus Veritas Backup Exec. "With Veritas, it was easy to do backups," says Landry, "but restores are another story. With CommVault, you do a restore and you know it will definitely work. That was not always true with Veritas. With Backup Exec there was always a question if it would restore. And Backup Exec did not

have the ability to restore one file or one e-mail message, which Galaxy can do."

In the course of their product review, ratiopharm invited CommVault to make a presentation. "It was a basic, straightforward presentation," recalls Landry. "They didn't have to do a hard sell, because their product was already there, in terms of what it could do. We made our decision that we wanted to go with CommVault, but we needed to confirm that what it could do wasn't just on paper. So we visited a CommVault user, Environment Canada in Montreal, and it was a done deal."

Mission-Critical Applications

Information regarding ratiopharm's products - sales information, inventory data, and customer information - is imported into their Windows systems from their mainframes. "If we lose that information on the Windows systems," says Landry, "the data would not be lost. But we would lose a large amount of time reconstructing the data. Therefore, it's critical that we have that information backed up so we can restore without having to reconstruct it from scratch. We also have all our R&D data on the Oracle database, and it's backed up by Galaxy. We cannot allow ourselves to lose R&D data."

E-mail is also mission critical at ratiopharm. It is the primary communication among employees, vendors, contractors, customers, and the law firms the company works with. "We deal constantly with law firms on patent matters and contractors for raw materials supply, which are an important part of our business," says Landry. "E-mail is the foundation of our relations with law firms and vendors. For example, if a vendor can't supply a particular pharmaceutical component that we have contracted to buy, we may need to break that contract and do a new one with a different supplier. All the information related to that process would be in e-mail, so it is extremely important that e-mail is protected and can be recovered. Besides that, there are all the meeting schedules, and back and forth correspondence that everyone keeps on e-mail."

Successful Installation

Because ratiopharm had not had an enterprise backup solution previously, they had to build the new system from the ground up, which made the installation more complicated. "We knew we had to buy new equipment," says Landry, "so we said, 'let's get into the big leagues with this.' We bought a tape library, and a backup server, and a switch. With the help of CommVault, it all worked from the first day. There were no real issues, just minor glitches. For the Oracle, SQL, and Exchange servers, all the backups were running right from the git-go. We did the installation on a Saturday and Sunday, so it would not interfere with production, and on Monday morning it was all working. That was amazing!"

Support is "Very, Very, Very Good"

"Support from CommVault is excellent from end to end," says Landry. "From the moment we place a call to CommVault looking for help, to the point at which we have a solution, it is excellent. They do a very, very, very good job. For example, we wanted to back up our sales reps on the road. It turned out that there was no off-the-shelf, packaged solution for this. But CommVault gave us all the detailed how-to information we needed, and guess what? It works!"

For testing the remote backup solution for the traveling sales reps, Landry realized they needed software licenses from CommVault. "CommVault just immediately gave us the short-term licenses we needed, no questions. If it didn't work, we would try it again, and they would give us more short-term licenses. And if it did work - which is what happened - then we'd figure out what we needed for long-term licenses. I have to give them an A-plus. They are way ahead of everyone else."

Landry also liked the training CommVault supplied. "We had one person go to CommVault headquarters for training. He came back impressed with the training and the test facilities. All the different scenarios were possible to test, and that made it very interesting. Once again, another high mark for CommVault."

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