

Pacific Sunwear strengthens business resiliency with IBM storage solutions.

Overview

■ **Challenge**

Faced with explosive growth, Pacific Sunwear needed to ensure business resiliency while reducing the time and cost of data backup and restore services

■ **Solution**

IBM Tivoli Storage Manager, IBM ServeRAID Ultra SCSI Controller and IBM TotalStorage Expandable Storage Plus technology, and an IBM @server xSeries system

■ **Key Benefits**

Reduced costs; improved productivity; minimized risk



Since its opening in 1980, Pacific Sunwear (PacSun) has grown from a small surf shop in Newport Beach, California to a leading mall-based specialty retailer of clothing, accessories and footwear for teenagers and young men and women. PacSun's 965 stores across the United States carry the industry's leading fashion brands—Quiksilver, Billabong, Hurley, Volcom and others—along with PacSun's own private-label products such as Bullhead, Kirra, Tilt and Lilu. With more than US\$1 billion in sales annually and over 12,000 employees in all 50 states and Puerto Rico, PacSun continuously

“With the rapid pace of change, we need to leverage what we have, not rip and replace technologies every few years. We’re already planning for our next stage of growth and are confident that with IBM solutions, we have a flexible, open foundation on which to build.”

—Ron Ehlers, vice president, Information Services, Pacific Sunwear

Simplifying storage management helps optimize resource utilization

evolves its product lines to stay on the leading edge of fashion. And the company's success in doing so is quite evident. In the past ten years, PacSun has opened nearly 900 new stores, almost doubled the footprint of its stores to 4,500 square feet, and increased sales by more than US\$900 million.

Nonstop growth creates data management challenges

As its business grew, PacSun's network expanded, and the company's IT staff realized that its existing storage management process was becoming unreliable and virtually unmanageable. Multiple products were required to back up the various servers in use, and each server had to be backed up independently to tape. This meant IT administrators had to maintain separate backup schedules, tapes and tape rotations for each system. The more servers PacSun added to the network, the more challenging this process became. To complicate matters, as product demand grew, the company added new shifts at its distribution center, reducing the data backup window from twelve hours to just six. Administrators worried about their ability to recover critical network services quickly—including product design, enterprise resource planning, and communication and collaboration—in case of disaster. And the complexity of existing tape management processes made it difficult to determine in a timely fashion which data needed to be restored to exactly which system.

“We were always at risk,” says Ron Ehlers, vice president of Information Services, PacSun. “There was always something that prevented every server from being backed up every night. To have a viable recovery plan, we needed a reliable backup solution.” Ehlers points out that data resiliency and recovery are critical concerns for public companies like PacSun. Loss of data can be disruptive to operations, impeding staff productivity and increasing operational costs. Additionally, new government regulations, such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, impose strict requirements regarding disaster recovery. Lack of compliance can open companies to fines and can affect their stock prices.

To ensure business resiliency, PacSun needed to streamline storage management and disaster recovery processes across its heterogeneous environment and to reduce the time for data backup and recovery.

Simplifying storage processes with IBM solutions

Any new solution had to support an open environment that included more than six operating systems, including the Linux®, IBM AIX®, Microsoft® Windows® 2000, Microsoft Windows 2003, Sun Solaris and Mac OS operating systems. The solution had to centralize and automate data backup and restore services so that administrators could focus on more productive tasks while ensuring that data backups were completed as required. It had to enable staff to back up data in

Oracle and SQL databases and in its IBM Lotus® Notes® and IBM Lotus Domino® environments without taking the data offline. And it would need to help staff back up and restore data quickly so that users could access information without significant interruptions.

Working with IBM Premier Business Partner CCS Technology Solutions, PacSun selected an enterprise network storage solution based on the IBM TotalStorage® Open Software family of products. Headquartered in Irvine, California, CCS provides companies across the United States with a single source for technology solutions and services. “The breadth and depth of IBM solutions enables us to help companies, like PacSun, solve business problems, reduce costs and more effectively leverage technology,” explains Mitchell Kleinman, executive vice president, CCS. “We have yet to be presented with a challenge that we couldn’t solve with IBM hardware and software technologies.”

The new PacSun storage management solution includes IBM Tivoli® Storage Manager software running on an IBM @server® xSeries® system, IBM Tivoli Storage Manager for Databases software, IBM Tivoli Storage Manager for Mail technology, IBM ServeRAID™ Ultra SCSI Controller software and an IBM TotalStorage Expandable Storage Plus system. CCS provided project management and technical support, helping to install and configure the software, set up backup schedules, develop retention policies and train staff. “CCS staff members were integral to the entire process,” says Ehlers. “They worked side by side with our team and delivered services that were key to the project’s success.”

According to Ehlers, the IBM solution was selected after an exhaustive comparison of several vendors’ solutions. Determining criteria were the IBM solution’s ease of implementation and robust functionality, as well as the in-depth services delivered by CCS.

With IBM storage solutions, staff can set and forget data backup services using policy-based management capabilities that track which servers need to be backed up and when, and what the retention cycles are for the backup tapes. From the solution’s central console, staff can easily check that each network server has been backed up properly. The system also provides the capability to find and restore specific files or servers in what Ehlers describes as “a very managed way.” In fact, during the test phase, CCS showed PacSun staff how Tivoli Storage Manager technology could restore two files within minutes without having to go to tape.

Using the disaster preparation and recovery capabilities in Tivoli Storage Manager software, PacSun can efficiently maintain a detailed recovery plan, automatically track data and automate recovery processes to help administrators restore

network services in the event of a disaster. "Statistics show that 80 percent of businesses that don't have a recovery plan in place will fail within five years of a major disaster," says Ehlers. "As a public company, we need to protect our shareholders. Using Tivoli Storage Manager, we have a higher level of confidence that we can restore all the servers on our network in less than 72 hours should something happen."

Greater efficiency and resiliency

Ehlers estimates that by using IBM storage management solutions, the company is realizing a "fairly substantial return on investment" (ROI). He cites improved staff productivity, increased service availability and reduced operational costs as the three major factors that contribute to this ROI. For example, by consolidating more than 50 individual backup schedules into one master schedule, fewer people are needed to handle storage management tasks—enabling administrators to focus on value-added activities, such as capacity planning. By backing up and restoring files to and from disk and then migrating that information to tape, backup and restore times are dramatically reduced, helping to increase user productivity and service availability. And by consolidating backups across the company's network servers, fewer tapes are needed, which translates into direct cost savings.

"Previously, a great deal of energy was required to ensure that backups were completed on time, and staff spent many hours redoing backups because of errors," explains Ehlers. "Now, with Tivoli Storage Manager, we can reduce our risk and better protect our operations in a very efficient manner."

Ehlers forecasts that the number and variety of PacSun's network services will continue to increase, that its distribution center will operate 24 hours a day to keep up with demand, and that his team will need to manage more stringent service level agreements (SLAs) and complicated retention policies to meet regulatory requirements. But as with any investment, he's taken these challenges into account, and he is confident that IBM storage management solutions will handle them seamlessly. "With the rapid pace of change, we need to leverage what we have, not rip and replace technologies every few years," says Ehlers. "We're already planning for our next stage of growth and are confident that with IBM solutions, we have a flexible, open foundation on which to build."

For more information

Please contact your IBM sales representative or IBM Business Partner.

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