

U.S. RETAILER GAINS GREATER RESILIENCE ACROSS ITS BUSINESS

When a well-known U.S.-based retailer acquired a new brand, management sought to establish a common IT platform to integrate and accommodate future acquisitions. The company turned to Sungard Availability Services (Sungard AS) —its disaster recovery (DR) partner for 18 years — to engineer a flexible cloud-based solution with shorter recovery times.

RESULTS

- Cloud-based recovery supports both physical and virtual servers
- Tailored solution proven with user acceptance test
- Recovery time objective (RTO) reduced from 48 hours to 8 hours

SERVICES

- Sungard AS Managed Recovery Program
- Tailored implementation of Advanced Recovery Solution, Recover2Cloud
- Sungard AS Workplace Recovery Services

ABOUT THE COMPANY

This American luxury goods retailer is recognized globally for its superior design and quality across a range of luxury fashion products. It has more than \$5 billion in global revenue and over 1,000 store locations.

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Senior Manager

Information Security, Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery





THE CHALLENGE

Deploying a common platform, recovered in the cloud

Companies that grow through acquisition often look for areas where synergies can yield greater operational efficiency across the combined company. At this particular conglomerate, management is pursuing opportunities to harmonize and consolidate information systems across a unified brand, and thereby establish a more agile and scalable business model.

“In IT, we are moving toward a common platform to support our brand and gain efficiencies in back-end operations and systems,” says the firm’s senior manager of information security, business continuity and disaster recovery. “An important part of that is streamlining our approach to recovery of infrastructure and data so our business can continue operating despite disruptive events.”

The company has relied on Sungard AS disaster recovery services for more than 18 years, most recently contracting for a Managed Recovery Program (MRP) service that guarantees a 48-hour

recovery time objective (RTO). During that time, the company worked with Sungard AS to keep its DR costs low, accepting that, with the 48-hour RTO, the business could experience some downtime and potential data loss.

“Today, the availability needs are more critical, so we looked to Sungard AS to come up with an approach that delivers much shorter RTO,” says the senior manager. “Moving to a cloud-based recovery was something we wanted to explore, because it would give us greater flexibility and significantly improve our RPO and RTO times. When we approached Sungard AS about this, they were very confident that they could build out a solution that would fit our needs.”

“It was important to us that Sungard AS wasn’t just pushing a pre-packaged solution and saying take it or leave it— that wasn’t their approach,” he adds. “Sungard AS took the lead to engineer a turnkey DR solution that meets our current requirements and future direction.”



THE SOLUTION

DR for a business in transition

The company’s diverse IT infrastructure resulted in several legacy systems that support key functions such as finance and accounting, procurement, point-of-sale transactions, store replenishment and product development. The underlying infrastructure includes both physical and virtual servers as well as numerous storage platforms. The environment is inherently complex — and is evolving in real time.

Rapid recovery from a disruption is increasingly critical to the firm, a business that operates on seasonal cycles in highly competitive markets. As the company delivers on new product designs, it needs to move merchandise rapidly into stores. Interruptions to systems anywhere

along the supply chain could impact business performance as well as customer satisfaction.

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The proof is in the testing

The company’s IT team worked with Sungard AS engineers to conduct a proof of concept to ensure the Recover2Cloud design performed as expected with key elements of the technology environment, including VMware vCenter Site

Recovery Manager (SRM) for the virtualized environment, server replication for the physical servers, and data replication in a hot site configuration. “The POC went off without a hitch,” says the senior manager, “so we moved ahead with plans to implement the solution and conduct a user acceptance test.”

A team of more than 20 Sungard AS technical staff contributed to the Recover2Cloud implementation and successful test—from network and cloud architects and engineers to data center operations and recovery specialists.

“The Sungard AS team provided expert advice and a ‘right-fit’ solution,” says the senior manager. “The Recover2Cloud solution adds value to our overall disaster recovery plan by delivering significantly improved recovery times. Data is now replicated on a much more frequent basis, and we’ve gone from a 48-hour RTO to an 8-hour RTO.”

He says the solution covers nearly all of the targeted virtual machines and physical servers, “but we do still have the earlier DR solution protecting a small number of legacy systems that were not compatible with the cloud-based DR. That’s no fault of Sungard AS. Eventually we’ll migrate those clusters of servers over to virtual machines and include them in the cloud recovery.”

The company also looks to Sungard AS for Workplace Recovery Services. The longstanding contract covers dedicated office space, connectivity, and equipment for 25 employees should the company headquarters offices be unavailable due to an incident. “It’s a small number of seats at a nearby Sungard AS recovery center,” he says. “It will support key personnel that are critical to our business continuity.”



THE RESULTS

Resilience, backed with a trusted partner

The company is pleased with the ongoing Sungard AS relationship and the latest evolution with Recover2Cloud. “Sungard AS has been in the DR business for quite some time, and I’ve also worked with them while at a previous company. Their people clearly bring both expertise and experience to the table, and they have the flexibility to meet the needs of their customers. With those three things in place, it makes for an easy relationship.”

“This transition to the Recover2Cloud solution happened while we were still in a contract for the previous Sungard AS DR solution,” explains the senior manager. “Sungard AS understood that our business had changed and knew what

we were trying to do. We found a path forward together. Other vendors may not have shown that level of flexibility.”

“I recognize that Sungard AS had to make an investment to deliver on our requirements,” he adds. “So of course we worked together to develop a contract that covered the services and solutions our company needs while also covering the Sungard AS side from a business perspective. We have the kind of relationship that made that possible. We understand and respect each other’s business objectives, and we’re moving ahead together—one step at a time.”

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