

OSLER

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Susanne Arseneault, Disaster Recovery Coordinator, Osler Hoskin & Harcourt LLP

Business Profile

Company Name:
Osler Hoskin & Harcourt LLP

Headquarters:
Toronto, Canada

Industry:
Law Firm

Founded:
1882

Business Environment:

- Integrated legal services with specialists in virtually every area of law.
- Maintains 450+ lawyers in Toronto, Montréal, Calgary, Ottawa and New York.
- Its clientele include Amex Bank of Canada, Microsoft Corporation and General Motors of Canada Limited.

Vision Solutions Product:
Double-Take Availability and
Double-Take RecoverNow

Implementation Partner:
Vision Solutions

Critical issue

Business continuity planning is important for law firms. Any interruption can have a severe negative impact not only on the firm, but on every company it is representing. Osler was using tape backup and had a strict protocol that called for taking tapes off-site. With this approach, their business processes would almost certainly be interrupted for a period of time in the event of a disaster.

Results

- Implemented at five satellite offices and configured to replicate back to headquarters.
- Replicates production data to centralized backup servers in real time.
- Manages backup and continuity operations for the entire enterprise from a centralized management console.
- Recovery from a server failure occurs in eight minutes.

Technologies

- Double-Take Availability and Double-Take RecoverNow
- Microsoft Windows
- Microsoft Exchange Server
- Manage Document Management
- BlackBerry Enterprise Server
- Accounting systems

Business Challenge

Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP provides integrated legal services with specialists in virtually every facet of business law. Year after year, Osler appears at or very near the top in all of the national and international surveys of clients and peers that rank law firms in Canada and other jurisdictions. While top third party rankings are gratifying, Osler understands that what really matters is the confidence which their clients continue to place in their legal work.

In the legal sector, business continuity planning is important because if the operations of a law firm are interrupted, it can create a profound ripple effect. Any interruption in operations can have a severe negative impact not only on the firm, but on every company it is representing.

Osler was using tape backup and had a strict protocol that called for taking tapes off-site. However, with this approach, their business processes would almost certainly be interrupted for a period of time in the event of a disaster. In addition, the recovery process from tape is often time consuming and complex. Given these obvious vulnerabilities, Osler re-assessed their situation.

Solution

Osler looked to implement a disaster recovery solution that would protect their business continuity operations, protect critical client data and help eliminate human error if downtime should occur. The company investigated their options and spoke to Sungard as a sounding board for validation. After reviewing four software packages as well as exploring different ways of getting data moved (SAN to SAN replication), they looked to Vision Solutions for real-time replication and whole server recovery. Given that this was a critical endeavor for Osler, Vision Solutions' impressive customer service and support team were major factors in the decision.





“We chose Vision Solutions not only because it met both our technical and budgetary requirements, but also because of its impressive customer service and support team,” said Susanne Arsenault, Disaster Recovery Coordinator, Osler. “In fact, what they had to offer was exactly what we were looking for. They have since exceeded all expectations.”

While clients are constantly putting their faith in Osler to resolve their legal issues, Osler has put its faith in Vision Solutions to provide data protection for disaster recovery. The product Osler chose was Double-Take Availability to protect and recover Tier One servers and Double-Take RecoverNow for their Tier Two servers. The project scope included three phases:

1. Defining Recovery Time Objective (RTO) and Recovery Point Objective (RPO) goals
 - Tier One servers = RTO < four hours
 - Tier Two servers = RTO < 24 hours
2. Implementing Double-Take Availability and Double-Take RecoverNow
3. Testing the solution in many different scenarios with all members of the team

With five offices, and headquarters in Toronto, the solution was implemented at each office and configured to replicate back to headquarters. The key applications that Osler is protecting include Exchange, iManage, BlackBerry Enterprise Server (BES) and accounting systems.

The team consisted of Osler’s Disaster Recovery Coordinator and a Technical Architect, a local consultant, and the Double-Take Software Professional Services organization. This core team gave Osler reassurance through the testing phases until they felt comfortable with the software, including the failover and failback techniques—as losing data was unacceptable.

Today, testing has paid off and the practice of Double-Take Availability and Double-Take RecoverNow work perfectly. In fact, Tier One applications, being protected by Double-Take Availability, fail over in eight minutes. This exceeded their expectations, as well as those of their clients.

In the new environment, the products from Vision Solutions provide real-time replication and failover capabilities while SRO is a streamlined, full server data protection solution that reduces costs for Osler by simplifying installation and restoration. The combination of these two technologies allows customers the ability to restore entire servers, including the operating system (OS), applications and data—even to servers with different hardware configurations. An uncluttered user interface also makes them easy to install and maintain for non-technical staff.

Although Osler has not used these tools specifically to achieve ROI, they have experienced savings in many areas including productivity and data protection. Law firms like Osler have a notably higher dependence on productivity, with time being measured in billable hours. Data protection urgency is also compounded by the need to comply with client support requirements in financial services, healthcare and government. The software solution has enabled Osler to continue business during outages that would have normally disabled their service to clients. They have also utilized the services on many occasions with failover (i.e., data center outages, office moves.)

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 High Availability
  Disaster Recovery
  Systems and Data Management
 