



*"By using Double-Take to replicate our data to the disaster recovery location, we can rest assured we will stay open for business no matter what happens to one of our buildings. Every time we test the failover function, Double-Take performs flawlessly."*

Bill Costello, Manager of Information Technology, Banner & Witcoff

## Business Profile

Company Name:  
Banner & Witcoff, Ltd.

Headquarters:  
Chicago, Illinois

Industry:  
Law

Business Environment:

- Over ninety attorneys
- More than one hundred support professionals
- Offices in Chicago, Washington, Boston and Portland
- Serves clients worldwide

Vision Solutions Product:  
Double-Take® Availability

## Critical issue

Tape backup was inadequate because recovery was slow, gaps in data were common and critical business applications remained vulnerable.

## Results

- Redundant data and applications are available at a co-location site
- Performed 30 second failovers in numerous tests
- No data is lost when production systems fail
- Saved a large sum of money by retaining their existing VPN

## Technologies

- Double-Take Availability
- Microsoft Windows
- A primary data center and a remote, secondary data center
- 80+ servers
- Extensive Web application environment

## Business Challenge

Banner & Witcoff, Ltd. is a law firm that focuses on intellectual property law, including patent, trademark, copyright, trade secret, computer, franchise and unfair competition law. The firm's client base is broad, in terms of number of clients, client size, geographical distribution of clients and technologies represented.

Bill Costello is the manager of information technology at Banner & Witcoff. As a former firefighter, Costello knows the importance of being prepared to deal with the unexpected; he applies that same line of thinking to insulate the firm from an interruption in IT services. For this reason, the firm began to re-evaluate its methods for backing up and recovering data. "The key thing in disaster recovery is being able to access current data, and also having critical systems failover," says Costello. "Our clients expect us to be operational 24x7, and so we have no tolerance for downtime. That means having a solution that quickly restores data and makes systems available."

Previously, as with most businesses, Banner & Witcoff backed up its data to tape, and then moved the tapes to an off-site storage facility. This method proved inadequate for several reasons. First, tape backups were conducted on a nightly basis; each day this left Banner & Witcoff with 24 hours of new, unprotected data. Next, retrieving the tapes and restoring the data was a time-consuming process, which forced the firm into a holding pattern. Finally, their tape backups did not protect the firm's applications, only its data

Banner & Witcoff needed a new solution that would continuously back-up data for quick restoration and one that would enable systems failover, so attorneys would be functioning in a minimum amount of time. Of the 80 servers in their environment, Costello identified a significant number of critical servers that required this level of redundancy.



He searched for technology that would efficiently replicate files from its critical servers in Chicago, Boston and Washington DC to servers at a disaster recovery location many miles away.

As part of its business continuity and disaster recovery plan, Banner & Witcoff now wanted to have a backup of both data and entire systems at a secure co-location facility, from which a systems failover could be performed quickly and easily and data could be quickly restored. To that end, Costello identified a facility in Oak Brook, Ill., but the major challenge was finding the technology to reliably transfer data to the co-location site.

### Solution

After testing various products from vendors such as Veritas, Banner & Witcoff, with help from the technology-consulting firm Keno Kozie Associates found what it needed in Double-Take Availability.

The law firm was able to deploy the software five times faster than other backup and recovery products, and Double Take Availability also enabled Banner & Witcoff to replicate via their existing VPN connections, which saved the firm about 80 percent versus the cost of implementing Frame Relay or point-to-point connections.

According to Costello, “What stood out about Double-Take Availability was its byte-level replication and performance in moving data. Despite high utilization, it places minimal demand on production servers. Double-Take Availability is the first product we found that was friendly in this environment.”

With Double-Take Availability, Banner & Witcoff now has the means to continue client service should one or more of its four office buildings become unavailable. Because of the Double-Take Availability failover capabilities, should a failure occur, end-users can continue to access both their data and applications from the disaster recovery facility, so they can continue to service clients seamlessly. Users can continue performing their jobs with minimal to no interruption; downtime and lost productivity are minimized or even eliminated completely.

Double-Take Availability has been replicating Banner & Witcoff’s data to the Oak Brook disaster recovery site since early 2003. With Costello’s experience in emergency services, the firm conducts monthly disaster recovery drills. “There’s an obligation to our clients and the company to protect data and systems,” says Costello. “A client in Japan may not care if we can’t get into a building because of a fire. We have to maintain the ability to work around the clock.”

During Costello’s readiness drills, Double-Take Availability has successfully replicated and restored data to the appropriate server in Oak Brook every time — without Banner & Witcoff losing any information. At the same time, Costello’s drills show that system failover occurs in about 30 seconds.

But the biggest benefit that Double-Take Availability brings to Costello and senior management is peace of mind — knowing that even if one of its buildings becomes unavailable, the lawyers and staff in that building will still be able to provide legal services to clients. “Double-Take Availability helps us provide assurance to clients and partners alike that our service capabilities will exist in spite of any disaster,” Costello says.



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- ◆ High Availability
- ◆ Disaster Recovery
- ◆ Systems and Data Management
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