

AutoNation Leverages Cohesity beyond Modern Backup and Recovery

AutoNation

INDUSTRY

Retail

USE CASE

Backup and Recovery, Disaster Recovery, Long-Term Retention and Archival

SOLUTION PARTNERS

AWS

CHANNEL PARTNER

Champion Solutions

INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1996, AutoNation (NYSE: AN) is the largest automotive retailer in the United States. It provides new and pre-owned vehicles, collision centers, and automotive parts through AutoNation Precision Parts. Headquartered out of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, the company currently owns and operates over 360 retail operations throughout the U.S with more than 25,000 employees. The company sells and repairs 35 different manufacturer brands and is ranked #138 in the 2017 Fortune 500. For fiscal year 2018, AutoNation recorded revenue of \$22B.

CHALLENGES

AutoNation has a large IT environment with a primary datacenter in Denver, Colorado and a secondary disaster recovery site in Plano, Texas. The company has over 1,300 virtual machines, 200 physical servers, and growing data of 1.2PB that supports retail operations.

Due to the company's legacy data protection environment, the IT team at AutoNation was experiencing a host of issues, including up to 6,000 backup failures per month requiring a dedicated employee with more than 70 percent time to address constant challenges. Not all applications were supported or protected, and existing storage appliances did not scale, which resulted in expensive forklift upgrades. Backup and recovery costs were growing exponentially and the company needed a scalable solution for modern backup and recovery. In addition, with increased application development in AWS, AutoNation required a hybrid solution with seamless integration.

"Our goal was to build a highly efficient and agile IT infrastructure that quickly adapts to evolving business requirements. By leveraging Cohesity's software-defined hyperconverged platform for modern backup and recovery, we substantially enhanced our operational capabilities at AutoNation, improved reliability, and lowered our TCO. Beyond backup and recovery, we are extending the Cohesity solution for disaster recovery and long-term retention in AWS. A key benefit with Cohesity was the ability for native integration with AWS, giving us the flexibility and scalability we need for future demands."

ADAM RASNER,

Head of IT and Operations, AutoNation

With a Disaster Recovery (DR) site refresh on the horizon, Adam Rasner, Head of IT and Operations, challenged his team to come up with a backup and recovery solution to address infrastructure issues and reduce cost. The team began looking at available options, including hyperconverged solutions, with the following requirements:

- Web-scale architecture with predictable cost model
- Ability to protect, store and manage secondary data with next-gen solution
- Capabilities beyond modern backup and recovery
- Single pane of glass with hybrid, multi-cloud approach

SOLUTION

The AutoNation IT team evaluated multiple solutions, including Cohesity and Rubrik. After an extensive proof-of-concept (PoC), the team selected Cohesity to be AutoNation's next-generation, hyperconverged secondary data platform based on performance, ease of implementation and management, and lower TCO.

Out of the box, Cohesity offered a single, easy-to-navigate user interface (UI). In fact, during the PoC stage, the team immediately witnessed a substantial decline in the job-failure rate, and any failures that did occur were easily traced and addressed. Moreover, the team was able to take corrective actions to ensure that failures wouldn't repeat, which previously was not an option.

It was key and critical for AutoNation and its go-forward strategy to implement Cohesity to integrate across all environments, including moving data from on-premises to multi-cloud and back to on-prem. With more and more next-generation apps now developed in the cloud, AutoNation will rely more heavily on cloud storage, including AWS. Cohesity's ability to support backup and recovery across a hybrid environment was instrumental.

The team deployed Cohesity C2510 nodes across AutoNation's environment, and consolidated data protection, target storage, and SQL protection on a single platform. With Cohesity's scale-out, pay-as-you-grow model, the IT team could easily introduce new nodes into the storage cluster and address growing requirements.

RESULTS

By deploying Cohesity, AutoNation not only reduced complexity and built a highly-efficient backup and recovery environment, but also lowered its TCO. With Cohesity, AutoNation saved 60 percent per terabyte compared to traditional SAN, and has reduced its yearly maintenance costs by 50 percent.

Rasner further explains, "Today most of our apps run on Tier 1, very expensive, high-dollar storage and Cohesity provided a solution to run some of our lower-tier apps at a lower cost. AutoNation has moved multiple applications from NetApp primary storage onto Cohesity, saving significant dollars and freeing up Tier 1 storage for production systems."

AutoNation reduced overall backup windows by 50 percent and improved replication between datacenters. The company also reduced job failure rates by 20 times, transforming efficiency and freeing up staff for other business-critical projects.

AutoNation now has a DR plan in place with Cohesity and is able to target recovery for 75 percent of applications to its on-premises datacenter in Colorado, and the remaining 25 percent to AWS. From a single pane of glass, the IT team can back up and replicate VMs, applications, and data between both environments. "One of the most significant benefits with Cohesity is the ability to have a single platform for modern backup and recovery, failover, and disaster recovery. Cohesity has given us flexibility to use AWS for backups older than 40 days, as well as legacy applications that are refreshed or refactored," states Rasner.

In addition, Cohesity's ability to provide seamless integration with AWS from a single pane of glass to manage both cloud and on-premises backups was a key benefit. AutoNation can use AWS Glacier for long-term retention, offloading data from appliances to lower cost storage. The company can also backup VMs from on-premises and spin them up in the AWS environment for test and development or a quick data validation. Being able to take VM snapshots on-premises with Cohesity and bring the VM online in the cloud, delivers what Rasner calls 'on the fly' infrastructure capabilities. The ability to spin up AWS EC2 instances from Cohesity backups created a tremendous amount of flexibility and efficiency for the IT team, as well as cost savings to free up capacity on Cohesity clusters.

AutoNation attained the following benefits with Cohesity:

- A single, easy-to-configure and manage solution, with global dedupe and compression
- Significant CapEx cost savings, and additional OpEx savings from improved efficiency
- Ability to free up Tier 1 storage and leverage Cohesity as a target, including seamless integration to AWS Glacier
- Scalable solution with ability to extend beyond backup and recovery to meet needs for DR