Anana Selects Cohesity for Data Management and Reduces Backup Times by over 98%

anana

INDUSTRY
Technology

USE CASE
Backup and Recovery, Dev/Test

COHESITY PRODUCTS
DataPlatform Virtual Edition, DataProtect

TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS
Microsoft, VMware

CHANNEL PARTNER
Softcat

INTRODUCTION

Anana delivers advanced customer experience technology and consulting to ensure its customers deliver high-value, personalised experiences across human and digital touch-points. Interactions over the phone, web, mobile, e-commerce, and within the back-office are managed seamlessly, streamlining efficiency while optimising customer experience.

Anana, a Platform as a Service provider, delivers value through its ability to provide a single interface platform for multi-channel communications to company contact agents. The company has headquarters operations in Bristol, United Kingdom and additional offices in South Africa.

CHALLENGES

The company found the combination of its ever-growing storage hardware and its existing backup solution had become overly complex to manage. With the growth of data and introduction of new data sources that needed backing up, the legacy platform wasn't providing the efficiency and features required.

One of the problems that Anana faced with its previous platform was the fact that it wasn't able to efficiently back up TDE encrypted SQL databases. After encrypting SQL databases using Transparent Data Encryption, the backup process was not deduplicating data properly, resulting in it backing up around 50 percent of data per database when running full backups. This translated into greatly extended backup times and the threat of not meeting RTO and RPO targets. The company needed a better solution that would back up SQL databases efficiently.

"We chose Cohesity because it was delivering all the features that we require and can be scaled easily for future growth and requirements. Cohesity has an innovative approach to how data management should be done and simplifies the entire process. Cohesity was fully engaged from beginning to end, from the Proof of Concept to final implementation. The solutions from the competition were neither as simple nor as innovative, and that is why we decided to go forward with Cohesity."

- LUKASZ WOLSKI, IT INFRASTRUCTURE LEAD

SOLUTION

Anana's platform supports contact centre agents with access to sensitive customer information through a single agent experience. Anana's back-end environment comprises large SQL databases and increasingly uses VMs, with IT operations spread across three sites: a primary instance at headquarters, with two active data centres for redundancy.

Anana faced and met its storage management complexity challenges when it turned to Cohesity to simplify and optimise its data management. The company is using Cohesity DataPlatform and DataProtect with clusters at three data centre locations, including the deployment of DataPlatform Virtual Edition at its head office.

Alongside day to day challenges of maintaining performance, resiliency, and recovery, its IT team also supports consultants, and dev and support teams with a range of services including database cloning, snapshots, and reporting.

RESULTS

Anana eliminated performance issues with backing up encrypted SQL databases and has seen tremendous benefit across its operations since deploying Cohesity.

With Cohesity, the performance of backups changed from hours to minutes for the daily incremental backups for SQL instances. Anana now uses a backup schedule that combines incremental backups running hourly and log backups running multiple times an hour depending on customer requirements. With Cohesity's Change Block Tracking capability, backup time has been substantially reduced, and Anana is saving approximately 240 hours per month in SQL instance backup times alone.

Anana consultants and reporting teams are using Cohesity's advanced Microsoft SQL Server data protection tools to safeguard data. Anana uses the clone database feature to trial platform changes for dev and test workflows. Now the IT infrastructure team can provide developer access to databases without the need to wait for the full restoration of a copy. Anana no longer has to wait for hours to restore a database to test schema update scripts, but can complete this action in seconds, and minimise the sprawl of data copies for development purposes.

Previously, when consultants wanted access to databases that were significant in size, restores were taking more than 10 hours, due to the fact that data was being restored to slow storage designated for testing. With Cohesity, the underlying storage is no longer a problem because clones are spun up immediately and run directly off Cohesity nodes. Cohesity's ability to clone databases reduces time to access data to less than one minute in many instances, delivering a tremendous improvement.

Simplified data management saves time and creates efficiency, allowing the IT team to delegate simple clone and restore operations to development teams and consultants. It is easy to train new staff on how to use it even for those without previous knowledge of administering backup platforms.

"In early March 2020, we experienced a failure of one of our SANs, leading to the loss of an important database server. Within a very short space of time we stood up a virtual machine clone of the failed (physical) server with the database attached, all running on the Cohesity platform, with no requirement for running a restore! We were subsequently able to conduct a full planned migration of that database to a new SAN cluster in a safe and controlled manner. Without Cohesity the restoration of that database to a working state would have taken a significantly longer period, which proved our decision to use Cohesity in one incident."

- ALEX THRELFALL, INFRASTRUCTURE HARDWARE CONSULTANT

THE FUTURE

Anana will continue to expand its use of Cohesity. To provide space for expansion and to allow for new customers to come onto its platform, it seamlessly added two additional nodes per cluster after the initial deployment without disruption. Anana aims to stop using Windows Server Failover Clustering to provision file shares and plans to migrate existing shares to Cohesity SmartFiles to scale-out NAS high availability.

In addition, the company will expand Cohesity for disaster recovery (DR) operations. In addition to being a consumer of services, Anana also collaborates with Cohesity on improving new features. Recently Anana and Cohesity worked on a new SQL migration feature that allows a large database to be staged to a new SQL server. By testing and providing feedback Anana helped Cohesity to release a new and improved version. Customer feedback can help shape the development of the product to suit the business.

Anana realised the following benefits with Cohesity:

- Reduced backup times by 98%
- Future expansion includes scalable solution for DR and dev/test
- Ease-of-management for increased efficiency and automated processes
- Time savings of 240 hours per month in SQL instance backup times