Leading UK Building Society Decreases Backup Restore Times over 90% with Cohesity

Principality Building Society

INDUSTRY
Finance

USE CASE
Backup and Recovery, File and Object

COHESITY SOLUTION
SmartFiles, DataProtect

DATA SOURCES
SQL

SOLUTION PARTNERS
Pure Storage, Microsoft Azure

CHANNEL PARTNER
Softcat

Key Benefits

- Reduced internal storage arrays from 13 to four to maximise consolidation
- Data recovery times improved by over 90%
- Time for administrative management reduced by over 80%
- Reduced TCO on single, hyperscale Cohesity platform

Delivering a high level of reliability has never been more important than today for Principality, which is the sixth largest building society in the UK, managing just under £11 billion of customers' assets for its 500,000 members. With a reliable and effective IT infrastructure, the organisation knows critical backend IT is reliable – and it can focus on delivering value for its customers.

Challenges

Marc Jones, Head of IT Services at Principality Building Society, was assigned the challenge of refreshing and updating key elements of the organisation's IT infrastructure. The aim of the project was twofold: to consolidate existing storage platforms, and to improve backup services.

In terms of consolidation, Jones was keen to reduce a larger number of storage and file-sharing vendors into a single specialist. The 22 people in his IT infrastructure team, which forms part of the building society's 100-strong IT team, saw there was an opportunity to consolidate multiple vendors into one central platform.

> "The joint Pure-Cohesity solution allowed us to get to a high level of consolidation. Our team spent a lot of time reviewing data management solutions and Cohesity performed even better than we expected. After deploying Cohesity, we invested in more capabilities within 12 months, and we look forward to leveraging Cohesity for greater cloud capabilities, including Backup as a Service for Microsoft 365."
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> **Marc Jones**, Head of IT Services, Principality Building Society

Solution

Jones and his team worked with IT infrastructure and services provider Softcat, to evaluate a number of vendors, introducing him to Cohesity, and the strength of the offering won out over the competition.

Principality's initial investment focused on using Cohesity for data backup and file shares across three key protocols: SMB for desktop, NFS for back-end storage, and S3 to present storage to applications.

The Cohesity file-sharing service was introduced alongside a new 50TB storage solution from Pure Storage. By implementing Cohesity technology at the same time, Jones says Principality was able to reduce the number of internal storage arrays it uses from 13 to four.

With the initial file share and backup processes in place, Jones was keen to see how Cohesity could help solve Principality's additional backup challenges. Within the first 12 months of working with Cohesity, the building society had more than doubled its backup capacity from 20TB to 48TB.

"We saw that it could do a lot more for us than our original investment. We just went all-in then and we displaced a few other vendors to move fully to Cohesity," says Jones.

Principality is now using Cohesity backup across VMware, SQL Server and Microsoft Exchange. The Cohesity Helios multicloud data management platform also works alongside the Pure implementation, with Principality archiving some of its backups to Azure.

Results

On a day-to-day basis, Jones says Cohesity is easy to use. The highly reliable technology works well in the background, allowing his team to focus on important business priorities.

The time taken to deal with any backup concerns has been slashed —backup-management issues that might previously have taken 10 hours-plus are now dealt with in no longer than two-to-three hours, and often less. This reliability and simplicity help breed confidence, says Tyrone Burke, Senior Infrastructure Analyst at Principality Building Society.

Cohesity has also improved overall recovery times. There's been a few occasions over the past three years where the organisation has lost a virtual machine from the network. While these incidents don't affect service, the speed at which the IT team can recover is now down to minutes rather than the hours it took before Cohesity was implemented.

The platform is so easy to use that Burke has extended data backup access to a second-line team that runs recoveries of files for users across the business.

"Cohesity does restores on-the-fly and you can have a machine back up and operational within seconds. That ability brings a lot to the team, and gives reassurance and confidence in data management across our organisation. It's not just a backup of the device; you can actually browse the data and then just pull one file if necessary. It's just so easy to use."

Principality suffered an out of hours system failure that would have impacted service to members if not recovered before start of business. They needed to recover an SQL cluster that had become corrupt. Jones says they were able to call on Cohesity to help recover the cluster and service was restored with minimal impact.

"The ability to restore data to the exact point in time we needed, and the speed at which we could recover, was key. Cohesity was great and really helped us get out of a tricky situation. In fact, they went over and above what we would have expected them to do."

Principality pursues a cloud-first IT strategy and is currently assessing how the building society might use Cohesity backup as a service (BaaS) for Microsoft 365.

"The cloud is very much part of my three-to-five year strategic outlook. Cohesity is going to play a big part in that. We look forward to taking advantage of some of the features that are now in the product."

With Cohesity, Principality has achieved the following benefits:

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Learn more at Cohesity.com

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