

Sparke Helmore Boosts Scalability and Reduces Complexity with Cohesity



INDUSTRY

Legal

USE CASE

Backup and Recovery, Disaster Recovery, File Storage

COHESITY PRODUCTS

DataPlatform, DataProtect, Cloud Archive, CloudSpin

SOLUTION PARTNERS

Microsoft Azure

CHANNEL PARTNER

Thomas Duryea Logicalis

OVERVIEW

Large Australian professional services firm Sparke Helmore (Sparke) experienced exponential data growth in recent years, and its IT team needed to identify a modern data management solution to replace a traditional, siloed storage infrastructure. Sparke set out to improve its backup and recovery performance, extend its disaster recovery (DR) capability, and leverage the cloud for cost-efficiency and scalability. Since deploying Cohesity, the IT team is seeing an overall time saving of more than 95 percent for data management.

CHALLENGE

The limitations of its data management infrastructure became increasingly clear as Sparke's data grew over recent years. The large number of files, additional dev/test environments, and the increasing volume of data, challenged its previous backup and storage capacities, without any simple and efficient way to boost resources to keep up with demand.

"Since our last major infrastructure refresh, our requirements had changed. The legacy approach of siloed infrastructure no longer provided the scalability and performance we would require going forward," says Hugo Evans, IT Platforms and Security Manager at Sparke.

The firm was also keen to investigate the potential of shifting to a cloud-based data management platform. The intent was that it might lower operational costs while providing flexibility and extra capacity when required.

"We knew a lot had changed from a technology perspective since our last refresh and so we decided it was time to look for a more modern platform that could support our growing operations, with a focus on scale-out rather than scale-up. Lowering administrative overhead in a busy team was also a key focus, leveraging automation, orchestration and self-service for data management," says Evans.

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- HUGO EVANS, IT PLATFORMS AND SECURITY MANAGER, SPARKE HELMORE

SOLUTION

In early 2019, the IT team conducted comprehensive market research to determine the best replacement data management infrastructure. The team examined solutions exclusively built for the cloud as well as on-premises alternatives and hybrid architectures.

“For several reasons, not simply cost, moving to a 100% cloud-based platform was not a good fit for us,” says Evans. “But we still needed the capability to leverage cloud for specific workloads, where it suited us and our clients.”

The firm turned to IT consultants at Thomas Duryea Logicalis (TDL) for advice about which platform and architecture would best suit requirements. After a period of consultation and review, TDL nominated Cohesity and Sparke deployed Cohesity DataPlatform and Cohesity DataProtect for a complete data management solution.

“Not only did Cohesity have a product feature mix that met our requirements, we quickly realised the additional capability Cohesity provides would be a gamechanger,” says Evans. “It met our requirements for backup but could also supplement our DR strategy and was capable of managing very large volumes of files seamlessly while providing instant searchability. Cohesity was very strong when it came to creating environments for development and testing and allows us to automate typically hands-on processes like environment refreshes. Bringing searchability to all backup data was also a huge efficiency, which my team loves.”

TDL worked closely with Sparke and Cohesity to design a new hybrid infrastructure architecture that made use of Cohesity’s cloud-native data management integrations—in this case with Microsoft Azure—and provided on-prem capabilities Sparke wanted. The full implementation was completed in less than two months.

The new infrastructure takes advantage of a three-node Cohesity cluster that resides in Azure. Sparke is also utilising eight Cohesity nodes that reside in the firm’s Sydney data centre and offer 260TB of usable capacity. Data is replicated between the clusters with Azure providing backup and DR capacity, including the use of Azure Archive storage for long-term, low-cost data retention. Cohesity CloudSpin is utilised to clone systems into Azure when required; this is particularly useful for scaling out VDI (virtual desktop) workload into Azure to accommodate additional load and enable DR.

RESULTS

The IT team quickly began to see significant benefits with the new hybrid infrastructure. “The vast majority of people in the firm have no idea anything has changed, however Cohesity made a big difference for the IT team and has enabled us to refocus on improving the user experience of our people, rather than the supporting infrastructure,” says Evans. “We can now perform a file restore in seconds where it previously could have taken hours or even days. Also, a new test environment can be created in minutes.” Cohesity’s ability to index stored data so it can easily be searched from a global UI has been a gamechanger for Sparke and a feature that saves hours of time for the IT team.

“With global indexing, we can search across all workloads and locations in seconds,” says Evans. “This makes Cohesity much more than just a backup solution as it also gives us broader discovery capabilities.”

The previous infrastructure required a team member to spend half of each working day proactively managing the various platforms. With Cohesity, management overhead has been reduced to minutes a day.

“Having a hybrid infrastructure gives us both scalability and flexibility,” says Evans. “We can move workloads in and out of the cloud, gaining possibilities that we simply didn’t have before.”

Cohesity’s compression and deduplication capabilities have delivered sizable cost saving benefits. The firm currently has 1.8 petabytes of logical data, however this can be hosted in just 105 terabytes of disk space, creating space efficiency of nearly 18x.

Cohesity has been a step change in the firm’s backup, DR, and data storage capabilities. Sparke now has a robust infrastructure, which will support its growth well into the future.

The firm’s benefits with Cohesity include:

- Reduced TCO with lowered storage requirements by nearly 18x
- 95% time savings for data management
- eDiscovery results take seconds or minutes rather than hours and days, and all can be found from a single pane of glass, and
- Flexible, future-proofed solution has multiple options to help ensure business continuity, including data replication to the public cloud.