

Nippon Light Metal

NLM wanted to be able to quickly and securely recover IT operations in case of a failure or disaster. With more than 100 vital systems, efficient backups were a prime necessity.



Overview

Since its founding in 1939, Nippon Light Metal (NLM) has produced and sold a wide range of products, from aluminum raw material to fabricated products. It produces lightweight, corrosion-resistant, thermally conducting and recyclable aluminum goods for a wealth of manufacturing fields.

Challenge

Nippon Light Metal Co., Ltd. (NLM) is the only dedicated aluminum maker in Japan. In addition to helping Japanese industry expand, the company is in the process of developing its overseas business. To do so, NLM required improved internal controls.

"We needed a system approach based around a business continuity plan (BCP)," said Masayuki Ozaki, systems administrator for NLM's general planning department. "As part of that, we needed to come up with a reliable disaster recovery (DR) structure."

NLM previously backed up its systems to tape and stored the tapes offsite. However, restoring service if a problem occurred was proving difficult. "There were several occasions when we couldn't recover from backup when a server went offline," said Ozaki.

"Our biggest need was to get the system fully recovered within a day of an issue occurring," Ozaki said. "However, solutions like building an equivalent standby system offsite or taking a clustered-data approach cost too much and took too much time to implement. What's more, typical DR systems require a wide-bandwidth network to operate. We needed another approach."

Solution

Nippon Light Metal began to discuss a BCP-oriented backup system. "We've been using VMware to virtualise our servers for about five years now," Ozaki said, "and one idea we had was to see if we couldn't back up our virtual server images. Simply backing up the data would require too much recovery time since the servers run different OS and middleware versions and would require subsequent patching. As we were looking for a good solution, we came across PlateSpin Forge®."

NLM began by backing up its sales, accounting and other vital systems on PlateSpin Forge. The company first executed a full backup to a data centre in Yokohama and tested subsequent incremental backups. Once NLM achieved stable operation, it set up PlateSpin Forge at a data centre in Akashi, running incremental backups as part of night-time processing.



At a Glance

■ Industry

Manufacturing

■ Location

Japan

■ Challenge

The organisation needed a reliable disaster recovery structure as a part of its business continuity plan.

■ Solution

Use PlateSpin Forge to back up sales, accounting, and other vital systems.

■ Results

- + Provided the ability to complete recovery within a day
- + Introduced a cost-effective solution compared to a fully redundant disaster recovery system

“Having PlateSpin Forge complete the recovery in an hour makes for extremely good cost performance.”

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“We have about 100 vital systems in our company, including the sales and accounting systems,” said Akira Yokata, head systems administrator at NLM’s general planning department. “We back them up in order, starting with the highest-priority ones.” The company has begun the second phase of the project, introducing PlateSpin Forge to the entire company structure, and will have nearly all vital systems backed up by phase three.

NLM also decided to place all server devices in data centres as part of its disaster-recovery policy. However, not all systems are in data centres yet, and these systems are being backed up on PlateSpin Forge.

Results

“We’ve only just implemented the system,” said Yokata, “so fully measuring out the results is going to be one of our future efforts. However, once we have all of our vital systems backed up, I think that’s going to have major results.”

NLM has run tests switching to the PlateSpin Forge server and can complete the switch in approximately one hour. “This test didn’t involve anything as critical as the financial system,” said Ozaki, “so we would’ve been happy to see recovery completed within a day. Having PlateSpin Forge complete the recovery in an hour makes for extremely good cost performance.”

“In case of disaster, continuing operations on a PlateSpin Forge backup system will require a certain amount of network bandwidth,” said Yokata. “To some extent, I think the cost of this is unavoidable. However, considering the alternative of building a redundant DR system, it still marks a large cut in total cost of operation.”

“Currently, we’re running the system in our Yokohama and Akashi data centres,” Ozaki said. “Going forward, we’d like to establish a backup procedure that includes the business systems for all of our manufacturing plants, which I think will help boost the potential of the entire group.”



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