

The Miller Group

The Miller Group employs the disaster recovery solution, PlateSpin Forge® from Micro Focus®, to protect a vital part of its home building business.



Overview

The Miller Group is the U.K.'s largest privately owned house building, property development and construction company. This award-winning company has built thousands of homes over the past 75 years and maintains a 97% customer recommendation rating. The company is also a renowned urban developer that creates vibrant commercial environments across Europe.

Challenge

"The Miller Homes Web site is a very visible part of our business," said Michael Leggiero, enterprise technology manager at the Miller Group. "If it were to go down, it would have an extremely negative impact, potentially leading to reputational damage or even lost sales opportunities."

The IT team at The Miller Group was not confident in its existing disaster recovery strategy, which involved contracting an external provider to ship backup servers to the company site then manually restore systems from backups, a process which could take several days.

The Miller Group simply could not afford to have its vital web servers down for such a long period of time and wanted a disaster recovery solution that would provide rapid, comprehensive protection for its servers that would be cost-effective and easy to manage.

Solution

The IT team considered a wide range of options but found that most solutions were too complex and expensive for the group's needs. By contrast, PlateSpin Forge offered an affordable, easy-to-use solution that eliminated the need for costly infrastructure replication.

"The concept of PlateSpin Forge really appealed to us: It offered straightforward protection for our critical web server workloads while allowing us to avoid expensive investments in duplicate hardware and software licences," said Leggiero. "We spoke with other PlateSpin® customers who were incredibly pleased and impressed with the solution, which confirmed it as the best decision for us."

The company initially purchased a single PlateSpin Forge appliance—a preconfigured package of server hardware and replication and virtualisation software with an intuitive web-based management interface. Working with our consultants, The Miller Group was able to completely protect its web servers within just a few days.

"Micro Focus quickly understood our business requirements and helped us to configure the PlateSpin appliance appropriately," said Alan Coutts, Infrastructure team leader at The Miller Group. "The consultants also provided excellent



At a Glance

■ Industry

Construction

■ Location

United Kingdom

■ Challenge

The organisation needed a disaster recovery solution that could restore critical system quickly.

■ Solution

Use PlateSpin Forge to comprehensively protect web servers and line-of-business applications.

■ Results

- + Implemented the solution in just a few days
- + Gained peace of mind that PlateSpin protects key systems

“With PlateSpin Forge, we no longer have to worry about whether we’ll be able to fully recover our systems in the event of a failure. This allows us to concentrate on more pressing matters and work more productively.”

MICHAEL LEGGIERO

Enterprise Technology Manager
The Miller Group

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knowledge transfer so that we were soon confident in managing the solution for ourselves.”

PlateSpin Forge protects the entire workload of The Miller Group’s web server environment—including data, applications and operating systems—within a single bootable virtual recovery environment for each physical server. The PlateSpin Forge appliance shadows the production servers, so The Miller Group can almost instantly start up the corresponding virtual environment on the appliance if a physical server fails. The solution also seamlessly handles the transition back from virtual to physical when the outage has been resolved, even if that requires deploying a completely new physical server from a different vendor.

PlateSpin Forge enables The Miller Group IT team to manage the recovery environment from a single web-based interface, which provides a central view of all protection plans and enables the monitoring of server workloads.

Following the successful implementation of the first appliance, The Miller Group purchased a second PlateSpin Forge appliance for its key line-of-business applications. The two appliances protect 10 of the company’s physical servers and are both hosted at an offsite data centre, managed by an external hosting partner.

Results

The Miller Group has not yet needed to use PlateSpin Forge to recover from a real disaster, but it now has the security of knowing that its vital web servers and key business applications are securely protected.

“The PlateSpin solution offers us 100 percent peace of mind, undoubtedly,” said Leggiero. “We’re very pleased with the protection PlateSpin Forge offers and confident that if we ever need to recover from a server failure we’ll be back up and running quickly, without any data loss.”

In the past, The Miller Group only backed up its web servers on a weekly basis. Now, PlateSpin Forge allows the IT team to rapidly test the integrity of workload replication with hourly virtual snapshots of systems and to store multiple snapshots for easy point-in-time recovery.

During tests, it takes just minutes to bring the virtual web servers up, ensuring very little disruption to normal operations in the event of a server failure.

“With PlateSpin Forge, we no longer have to worry about whether we’ll be able to fully recover our systems in the event of a failure,” said Leggiero. “This allows us to concentrate on more pressing matters and work more productively.”

The Miller Group is investigating plans to extend the solution by installing more PlateSpin Forge appliances to protect its enterprise content management (ECM) and enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems. It is also considering plans to implement PlateSpin Migrate to automate workload migration and ultimately to move to a fully virtualised disaster recovery solution, which will be managed using PlateSpin Orchestrate.



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