Project Summary:

Operating from Southampton, Import Services is the leading Port-centric logistics company in the UK, handling 5 million picks, 3.4 million cartons and 500,000 orders with 25,000 SKUs each year.

Having virtualised their environment, Import Services became aware that the replication and disaster recovery capabilities were slow and causing reliability issues. The company attended a CSG virtualisation presentation and asked CSG to review its existing environment and put forward proposals as to how their data backup processes could be streamlined.

CSG's implementation of Veeam decreased Recovery Time Objective and Recovery Point Objective (RPO) and delivered a virtualised infrastructure that meets all of Import Services' immediate and long term objectives.

"We have been very impressed with CSG. They understood our business, our environment and our issues and were able to put forward a cost-effective and easily implemented solution. CSG is now our first port of call for all virtualisation issues."

Andrew Furniss,
IT Manager
Import Services

Enhanced virtualised environment improves backup and replication

Import Services is the leading Port-centric logistics company in the UK, operating from Southampton and linking intelligent networks of supply chain services, with global real time information, to meet the new world of retailing. With an annual growth that exceeds 10%, Import Services handles 5 million picks, 3.4 million cartons and 500,000 orders with 25,000 SKUs each year.

Game changing technology

In today's world of continued growth and globalised markets, supply chain stakeholders have an opportunity to realise substantial value potential. However, at the same time, the resulting increase in complexity has created significant challenges. Most major logistics organisations are experiencing unstable growth and eroding margins, and are facing increasing pressure to lower their costs whilst at the same time improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the supply chain operations. Forward thinking logistics companies are responding to these challenges by improving and enhancing their IT infrastructures – and are now recognising the many benefits that a comprehensive, easy to manage IT environment can deliver and differentiate organisations in a competitive market. Many of these benefits have been driven by infrastructures being virtualised – enabling system improvement, savings; costs, time and resource.

"Server virtualisation has been a game-changing technology for logistics organisations, providing efficiencies and capabilities that help organisations simplify infrastructure management, service delivery, and application management by streamlining or eliminating tedious manual tasks, improving visibility, and ensuring service levels in a dynamic IT environment," explained Jason Clark, a Director of CSG. "Our experience and best practice methodologies deliver virtualised solutions that enable customers to dramatically increase productivity and improve the availability and efficiency of their IT operation at reduced operational cost."

Replication and disaster recovery

Import Services had virtualised their environment a few years prior to Import Services and CSG's relationship and the company had recognised the many benefits it had delivered. "As well as reducing the number of physical servers, one of the key objectives was to improve back-up and recovery processes," explained Andrew Furniss, Import Service's IT Manager.

Case Study: Import Services

Although Import Service's new virtualised infrastructure was delivering benefits, Andrew having taken overall responsibility for the IT infrastructure at Import Services, noticed that the replication and disaster recovery capabilities – a core requirement of the system – were slow and causing reliability issues. In his experience, he believed there must be a better technology or way of doing things - "This was a major issue for us," continued Andrew, "the sheer volume of picks, cartons and orders that we handle on an annual basis meant that we needed full confidence in our data backup and recovery capabilities."

By coincidence, Andrew attended a CSG virtualisation presentation at The Hippodrome Casino – an organisation for which CSG had designed and implemented a virtualised IT infrastructure to manage the entire operation. "In addition to a fully comprehensive IT infrastructure that would deliver the optimum performance, one of The Hippodrome Casino's main requirements was for a highly resilient architecture that would safeguard data and allow for operational continuity in the event of a major failure," confirmed Jason. Based on what Andrew saw at The Hippodrome, he asked CSG to review their existing virtualised environment and put forward proposals as to how their data backup processes could be streamlined.

Identifying the issue

CSG technicians analysed and conducted tests on Import Service's virtualised environment and confirmed Andrew's thoughts. "Although vReplicator is an excellent product, we were aware that, in some virtualised environments, the time taken to complete back-ups can be unacceptably long," continued Jason. "Having been server virtualisation and data storage specialists for many years, we always look for technologies that work seamlessly together whilst addressing the needs of customers. With breakthrough and innovative technologies used by 50,000 customers and protecting 7 million virtual machines globally, Veeam is one such technology, implementing data protection solutions that harness the benefits of virtualisation whilst ensuring data protection and disaster recovery are addressed."

CSG believed that Veeam would address Import Service's back up and replication issues and complete their IT infrastructure to fully address their demands of decreasing Recovery Time Objective (RTO) and Recovery Point Objective (RPO). Accepting CSG's recommendations, together they replaced vReplicator with the latest release of the Veeam back up and replication solution. Almost immediately, Andrew saw substantial improvements, with back- ups being completed within an hour, as opposed to overnight.

Case Study: Import Services

Benefits:

- CSG's experience and best practice methodologies deliver virtualised solutions that enable customers to dramatically increase productivity and improve the availability and efficiency of their IT operation at reduced operational cost.

- Veeam Backup & Replication provides powerful, easy to use, and affordable data protection for virtualised applications and data on VMware vSphere, unifying backup and replication in a single solution.

- CSG's implementation of Veeam decreased Recovery Time Objective and Recovery Point Objective (RPO) and delivered a virtualised infrastructure that meets all of Import Services' immediate and long term objectives.

Our first port of call

Veeam Backup & Replication provides powerful, easy to use, and affordable data protection for virtualised applications and data on VMware vSphere. It unifies backup and replication in a single solution, and its vPower technology leverages virtualisation to reinvent data protection. There are no agents to manage, no need to babysit backup jobs, and users can verify the recoverability of every backup, every time.

With compression and de-duplication included at no extra charge, users can manage the large volumes of data generated by image-based backups. Reduce backup storage consumption and the amount of data sent over the network. Combined with bandwidth throttling and scheduling capabilities, Veeam extends the protection of VMware environments to an offsite location or into the cloud.

"CSG's recommendation of Veeam has resolved our issues and we now have a virtualised infrastructure that meets all of our immediate and long term objectives," commented Andrew Furniss. "We have been very impressed with CSG. They understood our business, our environment and our issues and were able to put forward a cost-effective and easily implemented solution. CSG is now our first port of call for all virtualisation issues."

The deployed technologies include:

veeam

CSG