



Backup Express

Success Story: Acxiom Corporation

Acxiom Harnesses the Power of Backup Express to Back Up and Restore 100 Terabytes of Data on a Multi-Platform Environment

Organizational Profile

- Global leader in real-time Customer Data Integration and Customer Relationship Management
- \$964 million business
- Offers innovative database marketing services, advanced technologies and premier data content

Business Needs

- Back up 100 TB of data within a shrinking window
- Handle a multi-platform network environment

Environment

- Compaq Alpha servers, Sun Enterprise Class servers, and IBM servers
- Mainframe legacy applications
- Oracle data warehouses, ranging from 25 TB to less than 2 TB

Benefits

- Provides speedy backups and restores
- Supports multiple devices connected to multiple servers
- State-of-the-art GUI makes system administration more manageable

"It's been a tremendous advantage to be able to install the GUI on my system at home and remotely manage the enterprise-wide backup processes. It's saved me from making midnight visits to the office."

Betty Owen
UNIX Team Leader
Acxiom Corporation

The Challenge:

As the UNIX team leader for the financial services division for the \$964 million provider of mailing list and data integration services, Acxiom Corporation's Betty Owen has 100 TB of data to back up and the clock is ticking. She is responsible for the care and feeding of a number of Unix-based data warehouses critical to the company's international strategic marketing and promotion efforts. Her primary requirement is to manage the backup of its expanding Oracle databases within a shrinking backup window. The company supports a variety of Compaq Alpha servers (e.g., 4100, ES40, 8400, GS140, GS80, and GS320) with a growing number of Sun Enterprise class servers and IBM servers. A few of the applications currently on the servers were mainframe legacy applications that the company ported to a client-server environment.

Acxiom maintains a number of Oracle data warehouses, ranging from 25 TB to less than 2 TB, that supply large prospect databases that the company uses for dynamic data mining, real-time prospecting, and customer relationship management. A team of 12 Unix systems engineers supports the systems on a 24x7 basis. A major challenge has been how to back up and restore the quickly expanding data warehouses in a multi-platform network environment. The company also maintains a large and growing robotic tape library. The tape devices are distributed throughout the company, with the majority of them residing within the company's Conway, Arkansas location. Due to security requirements, the majority of the division's tape devices are direct-connected to servers dedicated to individual customers.

The Solution:

As the central element of Acxiom's strategic goal to develop a reliable backup/restore infrastructure, the Financial Services Division switched backup systems, standardizing on Backup Express from Syncsort Incorporated. Acxiom's Financial Services Division has made a decision to gradually eliminate its existing backup system, Networker, developed by Legato Systems. "Strong customer relationships are critical to Acxiom's business success," Owen says. "Backup Express gives us a number of features that allow us to develop and deepen those relationships."

While Backup Express is fully capable of handling hot backups, Owen notes, Acxiom needs cold backups that can be completed within the time frames expected by its increasingly demanding customers. Based on an advanced I/O architecture, Backup Express gives Acxiom the ability to do speedy backups and restores. "One reason for the speed of Backup Express is its ability to support multiple devices connected to multiple servers," she said.

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The Benefits:

Owen especially welcomes the ability to read Backup Express tapes on any machine, even those that do not have an installed copy of Backup Express. With Acxiom's previous solution, every machine had to have the solution loaded. It took hours just to get the data scanned in," she says. "If we want to cut a tape for a customer, I can cut that tape, send it to them, and they can read it on their machines."

All Backup Express functions can be administered through a graphical user interface (GUI) available on any computer running Windows with a TCP/IP connection to the network. "The fact is that administrators can become productive with Backup Express in less than a day," she says. Acxiom has the GUI installed on nodes running various Windows operating systems, giving them the ability to remotely manage the backup and restore process.

The GUI makes system administration more manageable, according to Owen. "It's been a tremendous advantage to be able to install the GUI on my system at home and remotely manage the enterprise-wide backup processes. It's saved me from making midnight visits to the office," she says. Every function available from the central console is available to authorized administrators on a remote basis.

About Backup Express:

Backup Express is an enterprise-wide backup and restore solution designed for UNIX, Linux, Windows, and NetWare environments and provides support for the broadest range of technologies and platforms. Backup Express is the only solution that supports any combination of UNIX, Windows, NetWare, and NDMP/NAS in a SAN, performs backup of all data directly across the fibre network, dynamically shares all tape drives, and controls this single enterprise environment with a single catalog and easy to use GUI. Backup Express also supports all eight NDMP incrementals.

Backup Express's distributed architecture allows it to back up to any device in the network whether it is running UNIX, Linux, Windows, or NetWare, while maintaining a single central catalog for the entire enterprise. Backup Express can attach tape drives, including large automated libraries, at any server on the enterprise; dynamically allocate drives within a SAN; keep sensitive data off the network; allow on-line backups of large database servers such as Oracle, SAP, MS Exchange, SQL Server, Sybase, DB2, and Lotus Notes. For more information, call 201-930-8200 or visit www.syncsort.com.