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Success
Story

Bank Invests in High Availability
with Veeam, NetApp and Cisco

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>
> — Neal D. Barrett
> Network Administrator
> Civista Bank

INDUSTRY
Finance

COMPANY

CIVISTA BANK

Civista Bank is the banking subsidiary of Civista Bancshares, Inc., a financial holding company with assets of approximately $1.3 billion. As a full-service financial institution based in Sandusky, Ohio, Civista Bank serves the needs of consumer, business, mortgage and wealth management customers.

CHALLENGE
The combination of limited recovery points and slow restores of the legacy backup tool hindered the IT team's capacity to deliver high availability to its users and created inefficiencies in business continuity and federal regulatory compliance testing.

SOLUTION
Veeam Backup Essentials

Civista Bank uses Veeam Backup Essentials to make frequent backups and replicas from NetApp FAS storage snapshots with little to no impact on the bank's 90 VMs containing 8TB of data. Almost all VMs reside on FlexPod.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

High availability is critical for financial institutions; however, legacy backup tools can get in the way. That was the case for Civista Bank until it replaced its legacy backup tool with Veeam® Backup Essentials™, a decision that set in motion a sophisticated, cyclical backup and replication strategy for disaster recovery (DR) and business continuity.

The legacy backup tool had only performed full backups. They were so time-consuming that only the most critical VMs could be backed up weekly, leaving the remaining VMs to be backed up monthly. The limited number of recovery points had taken a toll on the IT team's ability to deliver high availability.

Civista Bank didn't stop there. To further enhance high availability, the bank replaced another legacy system.

"Our storage had reached its end of life, and its performance capabilities were dated," said Neal D. Barrett, Network Administrator at Civista Bank. "We wanted to take advantage of storage snapshot technology, but only if we could continue using Veeam. We had placed our trust in Veeam for DR and business resumption, and Veeam had proven itself year after year. Trust is not something I place in many IT products and services, but I've used several generations of Veeam, and it has earned my trust. The key differentiator that drove our storage choice wasn't performance, features, scalability, purchase price or even total cost of ownership. The key differentiator was integration with Veeam."

With NetApp FAS in mind, Barrett contacted SHI, an industry-leading IT consultant, for an opinion.

"We knew the tight integration between Veeam and NetApp would be beneficial for Civista Bank and further improve availability," said Jeremy Tucci, Account Executive at SHI. "Using Veeam to back up from NetApp storage snapshots as often as they want gives them multiple recovery points without impacting production, and they recover quickly from storage snapshots. Veeam is easy to use, unlike some of the big players in the backup industry whose user interfaces are antiquated. Our clients are amazed by Veeam's simplicity. Veeam makes my life easier."

THE VEEAM SOLUTION

Civista Bank relies on Veeam Backup Essentials and NetApp FAS to achieve high availability, ensuring its 400 employees have fast, reliable access to the virtualized data and applications they need when they need it.

"Veeam is the number one availability solution and NetApp is the master in snapshot technology, so combining Veeam and NetApp is a win-win," Barrett said. "Veeam just works, and NetApp makes it work best for us."

RESULTS

✓ Multiple recovery points enhance availability

✓ High-speed restore facilitates fast granular recovery

✓ Time spent on testing for regulatory compliance decreases significantly

ABOUT SHI

Veeam Platinum ProPartner SHI offers customized IT solutions for every aspect of the IT environment from software and hardware procurement to deployment planning, configuration, data center optimization, IT asset management and cloud computing. Founded in 1989 and based in Somerset, New Jersey, SHI is the largest minority and woman-owned business enterprise in the United States. With more than 2,800 employees in 30 offices worldwide, SHI transformed itself from a $1 million software-only regional reseller into a $6 billion global provider of IT products and services.

ABOUT VEEAM SOFTWARE

Veeam® has pioneered a new market of Availability for the Modern Data Center™ to help companies solve the challenges of keeping their businesses up and running at all times. Veeam enables the Always-On Business™ with solutions that provide recovery time and point objectives (RTPO™) of less than 15 minutes for virtualized applications and data.

Learn more
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Civista Bank uses Veeam to make frequent backups and replicas from NetApp storage snapshots with little to no impact on the bank's 90 virtual machines (VMs) containing 8TB of data. Almost all VMs reside on FlexPod, the converged infrastructure solution designed by NetApp and Cisco.

"Once we chose NetApp for storage, we looked at pre-validated, end-to-end hardware solutions for VMware vSphere and decided FlexPod was best for us," Barrett said. "Since then we've experienced great support coordination among Veeam, NetApp and Cisco—kudos to Veeam, kudos to NetApp and kudos to Cisco. We're glad to have them all in our corner."

Barrett said several storage systems would have met the bank's basic storage needs, but one of them stood out from the rest.

"NetApp has best-in-class snapshot technology, creating the perfect union with Veeam," he explained. "The biggest hit to production performance is almost always the VM snapshot process, specifically the commit. The shorter the VM snapshot has to stay open before commit, the less data is committed. In addition, guest OS application-awareness of the VM snapshot takes a lot of care and coordination, and this is where Veeam excels. Veeam has application-aware coordination with the guest operating system down to a science. Veeam commits the VM snapshot immediately and processes backup and replication from the storage snapshot. This lets our trusted backup software do what it does best while significantly reducing the VM snapshot commit process and the impact on production performance. At the same time, our backup and replication times decrease."

This wasn't the first time Veeam had reduced backup and replication times for Civista Bank. That happened as soon as the bank replaced its legacy backup tool with Veeam Backup Essentials.

Replacing the legacy backup tool with Veeam enabled Civista Bank to perform full backups followed by reverse-incremental backups. Critical VMs could be backed up hourly and remaining VMs could be backed up daily, providing plenty of recovery points for high availability. Veeam's reverse-incremental backups also saved on backup storage, enabling Civista Bank to retain 30 days of recovery points in the same amount of space that held 14 days of recovery points with the legacy backup tool.

Another way that Veeam helps Civista ensure high availability is with high-speed restore capabilities, particularly when it comes to restoring VMs running critical programs such as Microsoft SharePoint. SharePoint hosts the bank's Intranet server responsible for almost all business processes including ATM tracking, deposit operations, loan processing and human resources. When the VM running SharePoint failed, the IT team used Instant VM Recovery®, to restart the failed VM from a regular Veeam backup in minutes. Before Veeam, recovering that VM with the legacy backup tool might have taken an hour or two. And, now that the bank makes backups and replicas from NetApp storage snapshots, it uses Veeam Explorer™ for Storage Snapshots for granular recovery in minutes.

In addition to impacting availability, the combination of limited recovery points and slow restores with the legacy backup tool made it arduous for the IT team to perform business continuity compliance testing for the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC).

"The testing process was long and painful with the legacy backup tool, but the testing process with Veeam is a snap because we can easily demonstrate that backup, recovery and replication are successful, saving us a significant amount of time,"

Barrett said. "Next we're thinking about deploying Veeam Endpoint Backup to back up our few remaining physical servers. We have a lot of faith in Veeam, and if we can consolidate backup with one solution—and one management interface—we'll have one documentation process for business continuity testing. That would be a welcome advantage."

Civista Bank discovered one more welcome advantage with Veeam Backup Essentials.

"We used Veeam to help us forecast and plan storage capacity as we replaced our aging storage arrays with NetApp," Barrett said. "Veeam helped us balance IOPs and storage allocations to ensure our VMs had the resources they needed. Every aspect of Veeam is helpful from customer support to the forums to knowledge bases. Veeam Software listens to customers and incorporates their feedback into future releases that are top notch compared to other vendors."

THE RESULTS

- **Multiple recovery points enhance availability**
  Veeam Backup Essentials is storage-agnostic; therefore, it had worked well in Civista Bank's mixed-storage environment. However, when that storage reached its end of life, the bank replaced it with NetApp FAS. Now Civista Bank uses Veeam to make frequent backups and replicas from NetApp storage snapshots, resulting in multiple recovery points for high availability. Because Veeam commits the VM snapshot immediately and processes backup and replication from the storage snapshot, there is little to no impact on production.

- **High-speed restore facilitates fast granular recovery**
  Veeam Backup Essentials provides Civista Bank with several recovery options that take minutes instead of hours. Instant VM Recovery lets the bank restart a failed VM from a regular backup, and Veeam Explorer for Storage Snapshots helps the bank recover guest OS files, application items and whole VMs directly from storage snapshots, without staging or intermediate restores.

- **Time spent on testing for regulatory compliance decreases significantly**
  Before deployment of Veeam Backup Essentials, Civista Bank spent a lot of time performing business continuity compliance testing for the FFIEC. Veeam significantly reduced the bank's testing time because demonstrating successful backup, recovery and replication are easy with Veeam.

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