

Case Study
Whites Powersports Ltd

Industry
Wholesale Trade

Customer at a Glance

- 3 x vGRID Enterprise Servers with Premium Backup
- Enterprise hourly backup
- Microsoft Licensing (SQL & RDS)
- vGRID Exchange Mail
- Business Fibre connection

VEEAM

Veeam[®] has pioneered a new market of Availability for the Always-On Enterprise[™] 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.

Beating Ransomware with Cloud Infrastructure

There are many good reasons to opt for cloud infrastructure, including better cost structures, ready access to capacity and the ability to access services from anywhere.

These advantages were factors that helped motorcycling distributor Whites Powersports choose to put its infrastructure in the hands of vGRID. But one which proved the most valuable only became clear nearly two years later, when a ransomware attack was quickly thwarted through the availability of hourly backups provided as part of the service. This availability is powered by Veeam[®] Software, which is integrated into the vGRID Platform as a Service (PaaS) offering.



Customer Overview

Established in 1952, Whites Powersports Ltd has served the New Zealand motorcycle industry with distinction ever since. Initially an importer and distributor of Triumph, Yamaha, Velocette and Vespa motorcycles, Yamaha marine and accessory products, the Hamilton-headquartered company today operates out of a 52,000-square foot warehouse.

Representing motorcycle industry brands including Shoei, RK and IRC, Whites Powersports services motorcycle dealers, repair shops and accessory outlets across New Zealand. In 2014, it acquired Birdman Motorcycle Accessories, changing that company name to Whites Powersports Australia, where it is now the fastest growing distributor in the industry.

Whites Powersports Director Kyne Larkin explains that the business has been on a growth trajectory for several years, growing its market reach in New Zealand

and in Australia. “We have bought four competitors in the last few years, adding new products and brands into the business. That brings challenges with the integration of data and systems.”

While the company had, like many businesses, traditionally operated its own servers and backup systems, it encountered a familiar problem. “We kept hitting capacity limits as the growth in infrastructure needs wasn’t predictable. It got to a point where there had to be a better way.”

He looked to Elite Business Systems, which takes care of Whites technology requirements. “They came up with a solution which offered better technology and performance than we could get on our capex budget. What was particularly attractive is that our core competency isn’t looking after IT. Instead of reviewing capacity every month and being hit with

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- Kyne Larkin, Director, Whites Powersports

another hundred-thousand-dollar bill, by moving it out we could focus on what we are good at.”

That solution was vGRID – and, crucially as it would turn out, Veeam’s software which provides availability through efficient Virtual Machine backup, fast and flexible recovery and advanced Virtual Machine replication.

“Not only did this mean someone else would deal with our IT better than we could, it also meant the performance and automatic upgrades of software, on the latest and greatest hardware along with a lot more physical and logical security than we could ever afford,” adds Larkin.

Ransomware Strikes

With the Veeam-powered hourly backups part of the arrangement to move to vGRID in 2015 the true value of the arrangement became abundantly clear when things went seriously wrong.

“Someone in our admin department let their guard down and ransomware rapidly propagated through the organisation,” says Larkin.

He admits that the natural first response is to panic, closely followed by getting the IT services provider on the phone. “When something like this happens and you’re locked out of the systems that run the business, it is scary. Across our operations in New Zealand and Australia,

both of which are on vGRID, we’re talking potential lost revenues of thousands of dollars an hour, in addition to the impact on our customers who depend on the goods they source from our organisation,” Larkin explains.

The remedy was surprisingly straightforward; because Elite had set up Whites with those hourly incremental backups, the business downed tools for an hour and simply turned the clock back an hour. “In reality, it was probably more like two,” relates Larkin, as ransomware attacks aren’t timed to run on the hour, “but we were able to switch to manual operations briefly while the backup ran, and we were back using our systems seamlessly, with a little extra work to load the manual orders into the system.”

What sort of money did the hackers demand to unlock the data? “We didn’t even let it get that far. It was just a case of shut it down straight away and get busy with the restore.”

There was never any concern that an availability solution powered by Veeam wouldn’t work, continues Larkin, as he had seen the promise fulfilled in terms of the multiple other benefits associated with the cloud approach to technology infrastructure. “Nope, there wasn’t any worry; vGRID and Elite were professional and on it quickly. The only question was how long would it take.”



Lessons Learned

The ability to recover within two hours from a potentially crippling malware attack at a time when high-profile ransomware like Wannacry and NotPetya are hitting the headlines, is invaluable.

Larkin points out that despite an active training and awareness regime, just such a bug made it past the company's defences: it can happen to you. "We are very careful with regards to data security, with regular communications warning our people of the dangers. But just one staff member needs to click on something, download something which spreads to others, and the system is locked."

With its systems and data in the cloud, the time to recovery was far faster than anything he could have expected in the past. "If we were on our own infrastructure, I reckon we'd be looking at a minimum of two to three days to get back in business," Larkin confirms.

This incident is, however, just one component in the value that he sees in his engagement with vGRID and Elite. "I can't say we've gone to market and compared, but on the flip side, I don't feel like we have had to. vGRID and Elite understand our environment and requirements, and that means we get good value out of it."

Learn more at
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