



SUNGARD

JMB COMPANIES

Customer
Success
Story

ENSURING RECOVERY CONFIDENCE: JMB COMPANIES TURN TO A VIRTUALIZED SOLUTION

CHALLENGE:

JMB Companies had a viable disaster recovery plan – but it had two data centers with the costs that come with doubling up on equipment. And two high-demanding production database applications led to unsuccessful testing and an overall lack of trust that the plan would work when the firm needed it. Facing flattening IT budgets but increased service demands, JMB Companies turned to SunGard for help.

SUNGARD SOLUTION:

JMB Companies has deployed SunGard's Virtualized Solution to provide reliable, affordable and fast recovery capabilities for its IT infrastructure. The AdvancedRecoverySM solution has helped JMB Companies maintain a recovery site with less server hardware and fewer man-hours. It has also dramatically improved system failover and provided faster recovery capabilities.



“While it took us one year to get our high availability site up and running, SunGard came in and had our virtual recovery site ready to go in three weeks for our mission-critical applications. This experience demonstrates the value companies can gain by tapping SunGard’s expertise rather than handling internally.”

Mark Zwartz,
manager of information
technologies at JMB
Companies

The IT operations at JMB Companies, a Chicago based insurance and realty company, had reached the limits of its hardware capacity. The firm’s production and high availability sites had both maxed out.

Back in 2003, the company’s server room had been designed to support one domain, one network, no telephone system and just six servers. But as business requirements changed, the server room had evolved into a data center. This meant by 2008, the data center hosted three domains, three networks, more than 40 servers and three voice over IP (VoIP) telephony systems. It also had six routers, 20 switches, a giant uninterruptible power system (UPS) and a 7.5 ton air conditioning unit – all housed in 10’ by 15’ room.

How did JMB Companies get into this situation? First, like most companies located in a major city, office space is expensive and limited so there is little or no room for physical expansion. Next, business growth generated continuing demands for more IT services – and with each request, more servers were needed. And third, similar to many service firms, e-mail and Blackberries had become mission-critical to the business – requiring 24/7 service.

If JMB Companies did not address this situation, it meant its IT team would need to be prepared to work continually in crisis mode – a no win situation. To avoid this crisis scenario, the typical option facing organizations is to expand or create an additional data center at the production site and expand their supporting high availability site by adding more servers. But as evidenced by the data center’s track record, this scenario would lead to a costly, never-ending IT expansion to keep pace with business needs.

VIRTUALLY ASSURED

Working with SunGard, JMB Companies decided to take a different course – virtualization technology. “We turned to virtualization because our data center faced a constant need to add more servers, while also being limited by the physical space available without expensive expansion,” said Mark Zwartz, manager of information technologies at JMB Companies. “Virtualization put us on a path to reduce our server footprint and optimize utilization, while also minimizing downtime.”

JMB Companies recognized the Achilles heel of most virtualized IT environments is that they rely on a single data center to facilitate system failover should an event occur. Tapping virtualization provided the company an affordable way to have access to a secondary data center for protection of physical and virtual IT environments.

JMB Companies deployed SunGard’s Virtualized Solution to provide a virtual infrastructure fully managed at a SunGard data center. JMB Companies had 10 servers up and running within three weeks of the project starting – with

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100 percent failover success, including its Microsoft Exchange and SharePoint applications.

During the third week after the initial deployment, JMB Companies experienced a SharePoint disruption at its production site, requiring immediate repair. Virtual Server Replication Services responded with a flawless system failover. By failing over to the high availability server that hosted the application, JMB Companies was able to repair the production site application and fail back without major interruption to the users during a production day.

“From our experience, virtual machines require more – not less – consideration of remote back-up and support. Virtual environments increase the number of systems and application interdependencies. It was very reassuring to be able to leverage SunGard’s information availability expertise,” said Mr. Zwartz.

SOLUTION BENEFITS

The SunGard virtual high availability site has helped JMB Companies focus internal IT resources on its production environment to meet growing business needs. The SunGard solution also positions JMB Companies to grow the recovery site as its production needs increase – with no need to purchase more server hardware or space and power capabilities for a secondary site. Additionally, JMB Companies no longer needs to manage application patches at two sites with virtualization capabilities automatically keeping the secondary site current.

“Going forward with our virtual high availability, we plan to move from monthly to quarterly testing – a strong demonstration that we see a 99.9 percent confidence level in the failover success that SunGard delivers,” said Mr. Zwartz.

Another major benefit of the SunGard virtualization solution is JMB Companies was able to reduce its overhead costs. The company cut its number of servers under management by one third and lowered infrastructure costs by one half – as well as reduced its internal data center space requirements. Also, JMB Companies can now expand its high availability site quickly and cost effectively without increased capital investments.

From an operational perspective, the SunGard virtual high availability site helps JMB Companies focus IT resources at the production environment to meet growing business needs, and ensure data and applications are available to support the business.

About SunGard Availability Services

SunGard Availability Services provides disaster recovery, managed IT, information availability consulting services, business continuity management software to over 10,000 customers in North America and Europe.

SunGard Availability Services | 680 East Swedesford Road | Wayne, PA 19087 | 800-468-7483 | www.sungardas.com