Mother Lode Holding Company Transforms Operations for Data Management with Cohesity and Microsoft Azure

MLHC
Mother Lode Holding Company

INDUSTRY
Financial Services

USE CASE
Backup and Recovery, Disaster Recovery, Scale-Out NAS

COHESITY SOLUTIONS
DataPlatform, DataProtect, CloudArchive, CloudTier

SOLUTION PARTNERS
Microsoft Azure, VMware

CHANNEL PARTNER
ePlus

Key Benefits

- Reduced time for Exchange backups by 75%
- More than 20x deduplication and compression even with raw data and image files
- Time for data restore process lowered by more than 98%
- Up to 40% TCO savings over three years compared to competitors

Mother Lode Holding Company (MLHC) and its family of companies provide title insurance and settlement support services to the nation's real estate industry. With the founding of its principal subsidiary, Placer Title Company in 1973, Mother Lode has since expanded outside of its original California market to provide title, escrow, and title-related products and services throughout the United States. Mother Lode continues to extend its commercial and residential services by empowering talented, innovative people to make the decisions necessary to satisfy customers on the spot and by utilizing technology that delivers measurable improvement of service to its customers.

Challenges

The IT Department at MLHC is responsible for providing technology services to more than 1,200 employees across all its brands, including remote office support. MLHC had several legacy data protection systems in place in past years, including IBM and Veritas NetBackup. These aging solutions worked well at the time, but as data volumes have grown, the IT team was at the mercy of dated architecture that was struggling to properly back up tens of millions of files.

The escrow and title industry produces a large volume of small files, and data is often retained indefinitely to meet both regulatory and internal requirements. Before implementing a new solution, data backup and recovery was a tedious and cumbersome process. A full backup was not able to complete before the next full backup needed to begin, and restoring data was even more difficult. While the IT team developed bespoke solutions and workarounds for data protection through snapshots and replication, it was evident that a new solution was needed in order to keep pace with business requirements. In addition, the company aimed to reduce costs and was exploring how to leverage Microsoft Azure for tiered storage and disaster recovery.

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"We have seen a dramatic improvement of day-to-day operations, greatly simplifying data management across our entire organization with Cohesity. As our requirements expand, Cohesity will allow MLHC to shorten RPO and RTO times, make our physical storage expenditure curve more shallow, move colder data to the cloud for uncluttered data tiering, and migrate file shares on a single web-scale platform with on-the-fly maintenance for stability and reliability."

Ryan Murphy, Chief Information Security Officer, MLHC

MLHC aimed for the following capabilities in a data management solution:

- Enable simplified management for reliable and resilient data protection and recovery

- Improve overall data recovery process, including options for granular recovery

- Reduce costs to enable a smaller physical storage footprint

- Provide a scalable solution to meet future data requirements with the ability to migrate data to the cloud

Solution

In the past several years, MLHC tried to resolve its data management challenges with other solutions, but found many vendors dramatically oversold their capabilities. While the existing NetBackup solution was successful for a time, once the company's data footprint began to grow, the IT team sought out other solutions. After speaking to a Cohesity customer with a similar environment, and following a successful Proof of Concept, the IT team chose Cohesity for backup and recovery as well as for future use of its scale-out NAS capabilities.

To date, Cohesity has replaced NetBackup for raw file storage, while MLHC continues to explore the possibility of expanding their use to include roaming profiles and home directories in the future. Cohesity currently enables MLHC to protect 175TB of physical space to back up SMB and CIFS shares.

Results

Cohesity has quickly become a major component of the data center infrastructure, backing up the entire VMware environment, providing simplified management, and ensuring rapid disaster recovery. Cohesity also gives the IT team options for tiering data to optimize costs. Not all of its data will need to be stored on expensive, high speed disk storage, and some data can easily move to the cloud.

The company will be able to lower costs by shifting data with lower security risks and regulatory requirements to the cloud, while being able to quickly locate and retrieve it wherever it is stored with Cohesity's Google-like search. Data recovery is greatly simplified and will allow users to easily find what they need.

Before, it could have taken hours to locate a file to restore, but with Cohesity that process is nearly instantaneous. "Often times when we are asked to recover a folder or file, it's like looking for a needle in a haystack, except that you don't know if you're looking for a needle or a haystack, and you have no idea where the pile of hay lives," explains Murphy. "With Cohesity, the UI is phenomenal and you just start typing words and the results are instantaneous, making data recovery a breeze."
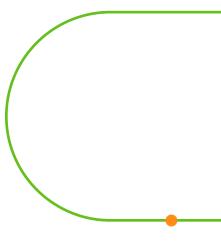
The IT team will soon begin using the cloud as part of their disaster recovery strategy. The company has tested Cohesity to back up a VM on-premises with a snapshot, replicate the backup to Cohesity CloudEdition, and then use the native API integration with Azure to stage as a source or destination. The first test was on a 200TB VM that the team was able to bring up in Azure in under 15 minutes. It makes sense for MLHC to continue to leverage Azure for reduced cost and greater efficiency.

"People's time is just as expensive as any physical asset we have. In some cases, it's a higher cost savings the more data we migrate to the cloud," said Murphy. "With a small IT team, time and efficiency are key, and hiring more people is not necessarily a way to save cost. The best way IT can contribute to the bottom line and increase revenue is to do our jobs better than our peers and adopt technology that makes that happen. Cohesity enables efficiency, which at the end of the day makes data management more cost effective."

COHESITY

MLHC realized many benefits with Cohesity including:

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- Time for data restore process lowered by more than 98%

- Up to 40% TCO savings over three years compared to competitors

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