



WESTCOAST

Databarracks' case study

TECHNOLOGY DISTRIBUTOR SECURES ITS DATA WITH BACKUP AS A SERVICE

About Westcoast

Established in 1984, the Westcoast Group remains privately held with its distributor arm, Westcoast Limited, distributing leading IT brands to a broad range of resellers, retailers and office product dealers in the UK and beyond.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of its staff, the Group is flourishing with revenues reaching £2.8 billion in 2019.

It is consistently ranked in the Sunday Times Top Track of the 100 Largest Privately-owned UK Companies, and is the largest privately-held business in the Thames Valley region.

The Challenge

Karl Harris is Westcoast's CIO. He joined the business four years ago with a brief to modernise its IT.

"There are some incredible people here at Westcoast driving the business and it had grown so rapidly that IT needed to catch up. That is the job I was tasked with and that meant building a team and developing the competencies vital for *modern-IT*. We wanted to focus on developing these competencies but Backup was consuming a lot of the team's time.

"Backup is absolutely critical, but there is really no glory in it. It's a disaster if it goes wrong, so we can't allow that to happen, but it's not necessarily the most exciting task for the team."

The incumbent Backup solution was using a well-known but traditional backup

solution provider between Westcoast's sites but the management had become problematic.

"The solution we had worked, but it was a significant overhead with one of our engineers spending their entire time on it. That's bad for the engineer because it's not the most stimulating task. It's bad for the organisation because that deep expertise is limited to one person. Our IT Operating model is 24/7 so we could not afford to have such a critical task supported by one person.

"We decided to move to a Backup as a Service model as soon as possible as this would solve these issues.

"Databarracks were already a Westcoast partner so we investigated with them whether the solution could fit our specific needs."



The Solution

Westcoast chose Backup as a Service, powered by Commvault across its data centres and into Microsoft Azure. Databarracks managed the installation and implementation for approximately 1,000 servers and 2,000 Office 365 users. Databarracks takes responsibility for the day-to-day health of backups checking successes and failures with proprietary tools and trouble shooting issues. Databarracks' experts are also available 24/7 for to carry-out recoveries.

"We mostly run on-prem with some services in the cloud that run our high volume workloads. We did not think about using the cloud specifically for backup though, but it made sense as we could use it as part of our strategy to maintain high availability across our sites. We could leverage the cloud to securely store and facilitate fast recovery of backup volumes even though we run mostly on-prem."

Westcoast's unique requirement required a bespoke approach.

"The way we wanted our backups architected and deployed wasn't standard. It's was an edge-case for Databarracks but the team were brilliant. They were flexible to adjust how it was deployed for us. It extended the timeline a little, but it's built the way we wanted."

The Benefits

"There are two key benefits of the service. Firstly, it saves our resources letting us do more with less. Secondly, by working with an external service provider we add an additional layer of security to our backups.

"Our Information Security Team war-game the different scenarios we face. Backups are critical to our ability to recover from several types of incident so we must keep them secure. Using a third-party service provider take the management of backups outside our domain and keeping further copies in Azure adds additional protection.

"Backup is a perfect candidate for outsourcing. It's critical, but it's not a *value-adding* IT service and so not competency we want to spend resource on developing. We get access to the team of experts at Databarracks who do an amazing job and can reassign our people."

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Westcoast were able to make a compelling business case for the change.

“Backup as a Service costs more than our internal solution did, as should be expected. Our business case, however took into account more than just the immediate cost-comparison. We improved our resilience, gained access to experts and were able to reassign a valuable, skilled internal resource.

“We are still working through our digital roadmap - modernising our backup to be resilient and reliable was definitely part of that effort. Today we are focusing on the things that help the business be more streamlined, efficient, compete in new markets and help the customer experience.

“Collaboration initiatives, BOTS, new warehouse technologies and software along with mapping new business models are just some of the many projects we are involved in as we digitise our business.

“IT resilience underpins everything. If we're offline, we don't get back the revenue that we lose. Downtime translates very linearly to lost revenue. Backup as a Service from Databarracks is a vital component in keeping us secure, prepared and resilient.”



About Databarracks

Databarracks is the UK's specialist business continuity and IT disaster recovery provider.

In 2003, we launched one of the world's first true managed backup services to bring indestructible resilience to mission critical data.

Today, we deliver award winning data and continuity services from some of the most secure data centres in the world, 30 metres below ground in ex-military nuclear bunkers, supported 24/7/365 by our team of handpicked experts.

We make enterprise-class continuity, security and resilience accessible for organisations of all sizes.

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