

boxIT

boxIT values stability and simplicity of Micro Focus VM Explorer. The IT services provider saves time and money backing up more than 85 virtual machines.

Overview

Founded in 2001, San Francisco-based boxIT provides enterprise-grade IT infrastructure and support for small and mid-sized businesses. Its 14 staff members manage about 1,900 systems for more than 100 clients.

Challenge

Backing Up a Growing Collection of Managed VMS

boxIT had been relying on a patchwork of backup and replication solutions to safeguard data on VMs. Having multiple solutions drove up training requirements and costs. It also made it more difficult to troubleshoot problems, as only certain staff members had in-depth knowledge of each backup application.

“With VM Explorer, there are no complicated dependencies, and it integrates with VMware’s own internal functions within vSphere ESXi. That makes the software very stable and predictable.”

ERIC HASLER

Senior Network Architect
boxIT

“We spent countless hours managing individual backup solutions, confirming that backups were completed successfully, and training people to restore data,” explains Eric Hasler, boxIT’s Senior Network Architect.

In addition, the incumbent solutions were creating customer service challenges. Because the solutions were bandwidth “hogs,” boxIT personnel would schedule backups to run over the weekend. But often they were not complete by Monday morning, leading to system slowdowns and customer complaints.

In 2009, the boxIT team set out to find a better solution. They considered a number of options but were sold on VM Explorer after using the trial version. “We all took a look at the solution, and quickly agreed it was the way to go,” Hasler says.

Solution

Simple Yet More Comprehensive

Since implementing VM Explorer, boxIT has been using it to back up all of the VMs it manages in its private cloud infrastructure. Due to the low resource requirements, the company is able to maintain a single, centralized server populated with a large quantity of large hard drives that is fully capable of backing up the entire environment. Unlike boxIT’s prior



At a Glance

■ Industry

Business Services

■ Location

United States

■ Challenge

boxIT wanted a single—and simple—solution for backing up virtual machines (VMs) in its private cloud infrastructure.

■ Products and Services

Micro Focus VM Explorer

■ Success Highlights

- + Reduced labor and training costs
- + No system slowdown during backups, improving customer satisfaction
- + Eight times faster virtual machine backup saves time, allowing staff members to focus on high-value activities

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solutions, VM Explorer “grabs” each machine in its entirety, enabling boxIT to quickly and easily back up all client data without needing to install software on the system.

“VM Explorer uses built-in functions of VMware vSphere ESXi to take a snapshot of virtual machines and start the backup process. That results in exceptional speed and stability, which I consider to be some of the application’s most valuable benefits,” notes Hasler. He also values the ease with which he can add new VMs to the backup—a process that he says is radically different from, and better than, other VM backup tools.

Results

Significantly Faster Backups and Restores

Setup time was ‘massively reduced’ using VM Explorer, says Hasler. In addition, he says VM Explorer didn’t place a heavy burden on system resources. That meant the company could perform backups during the day while servers were being used heavily, without affecting system performance.

Today, the company can run eight simultaneous backups—totaling over 95 TB of data per week—without experiencing problems with server speed. And, Hasler says that using VM Explorer to restore data is equally as quick and easy.

Hasler says that due to factors outside of VM Explorer, backups occasionally corrupt. Thanks to the solution’s backup method, which uses vSphere ESXi’s integrated functions and application programming interface calls, boxIT is able to successfully piece together all of

the data—a feat not possible with the tools it was using previously. He says it would have been very difficult to recover from massive server failure, such as one caused by a very large power surge or a broken water pipe, using other solutions boxIT has tried in the past. Because VM Explorer uses common methods for whole VM backups, boxIT has the capability to manually recover data and restore systems in such situations.

Reduced Labor Costs—and Virtually No Training Required

VM Explorer is also easy for boxIT staff to learn and use. In fact, it has helped boxIT reduce its backup and restore costs—savings that it passes on to customers. Customers no longer need to pay for an on-site service call. Backups can be monitored and managed from boxIT’s data center, providing a seamless experience for end-users.

Hasler says training is also a cinch. “Teaching someone to do a backup and restore takes 10 minutes, and they don’t have to read a manual,” he says. “We show people once, and they can go and use it.”

Seamless Data Center Migration

At the beginning of 2016, boxIT migrated to a new data center. It was a process Hasler says would have been incredibly complex and difficult without VM Explorer.

Over a two-month period, the company moved its entire IT environment to a new location. Using VM Explorer’s replication functionality, Hasler was able to transfer the vast majority of

data directly over the Internet. VM Explorer performed 12 to 15 replications in sequence, sending Hasler an email to let him know when each job was complete and the servers in the new data center were ready to be brought online.

Simple, Seamless, Stable

VM Explorer also backs up VMs without disrupting boxIT’s data center operations.

“Any backup software reaches into our environment and works directly with the hosts. If I have a host crash, 20 VMs go down, and it’s a big problem not just for me, but also for 15 to 20 of our clients. With VM Explorer, we never have to worry about that,” he concludes.