

Sungard with DCA

IT leader transforms recovery and production efficiencies with Micro Focus® Data Center Automation.

Overview

Sungard Availability Services (Sungard AS) is a premier provider of managed IT services, information availability consulting, business continuity management software, and disaster recovery services to clients in North America, Europe, and India. With more than 90 highly resilient facilities worldwide and over 40 recovery units, Sungard AS employs about 3,000 professionals with extensive IT and business experience, helping thousands of customers globally achieve uninterrupted access to their mission-critical data and systems.

Challenge

To increase IT efficiencies and predictability and reduce service delivery costs, Sungard AS

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KAUSHIK RAY

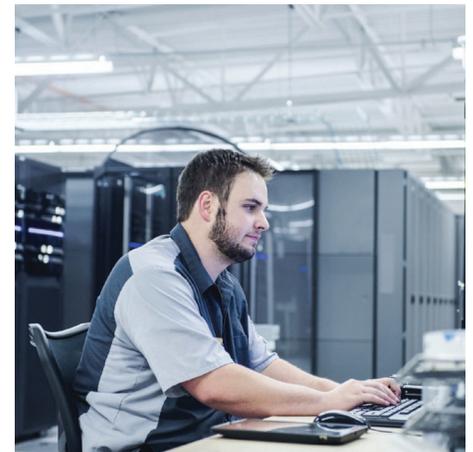
Vice President of Global Architecture,
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Sungard Availability Services

pursued a transformative vision of complete end-to-end automation, orchestration, and touch-free execution of all application recovery procedures.

Traditional disaster recovery processes and tasks have been heavily manual and require high levels of expertise, especially in times of rapid technological evolution. No matter how skilled an organization might be, this reliance on manual tasks inevitably leads to human error, increased costs, project complexity, and unnecessary difficulties in execution.

Sungard AS had a bold vision: by drastically reducing—or in many cases completely eliminating—the manual effort, it aimed to lessen errors and risks, realize predictable IT, accelerate recovery times, and lower costs while bringing a seamless experience to customers.

“Most people are still in the spreadsheet world, and that creates several problems,” says Kaushik Ray, Sungard AS vice president of global architecture and customer engineering. “It’s hard to keep recovery documentation consistently up-to-date and available; we’re typically talking about hundreds of applications sitting on top of thousands of servers. Even if the procedures are correct, the people executing them make mistakes. It’s like assembling furniture using instructions from the factory—one step done incorrectly or out of order can throw the whole sequence off. Our



At a Glance

- **Industry**
Computer Services
- **Location**
Wayne, Pennsylvania
- **Challenge**
Achieve end-to-end automation, orchestration, and execution of infrastructure and application recovery procedures
- **Products and Services**
Data Center Automation
Universal Discovery
Universal Configuration Management Database
Software Education Services
- **Results**
 - + Improve test success rate to 90% (vs. industry average of 35%)
 - + Accelerate infrastructure build-time for customers by an average of 70-75%, enabling scalability for future business growth
 - + Shrink recovery time by 60-65% for improved Recovery Time Objective (RTO) performance
 - + Reduce incidents due to incorrect recovery procedures and manual errors by 50%

end-state goal is to make the entire recovery process virtually touch-free.”

Solution

Sungard AS’ innovation was to transform disaster recovery through end-to-end automation, orchestration, and touch-free execution of all application recovery procedures. Data Center Automation (DCA) Software Solutions were key. First, Sungard AS leveraged Universal Discovery (UD) and Universal Configuration Management Database (UCMDB) to deploy an automated, agentless Application Discovery and Dependency Mapping solution that discovers customer environment parameters and stores the data in the configuration management database. For customers who don’t wish to share the credentials required by UD, Sungard AS populates the configuration management database manually. In either case, Application Discovery and Dependency Mapping gives Sungard AS complete topologies, or blueprints, of customer IT systems.

Next, Sungard AS leveraged these topologies to automate recovery procedures using Operations Orchestration. “By translating the IT blueprint data from UCMDB into end-to-end workflows executed through Operations Orchestration we eliminate costly, time-consuming and error-prone manual maintenance and execution of recovery procedures,” Ray says. The solution is technology and recovery-strategy agnostic, enabling a holistic strategy across a hybrid IT environment.

Groundbreaking Recovery Execution System

The heart of the Sungard AS proprietary disaster recovery automation solution is a custom application called the Recovery Execution System (RES). A portal for end-to-end automation, RES engages automated discovery to obtain recovery configurations from CMDB; integrates with Resource Planning Systems to

obtain reserved assets for recovery; generates recovery workflows; and executes recovery actions—also integrating with Sungard AS ticketing system to resolve exceptions.

Thanks to the flexibility and heterogeneous support of Operations Orchestration, RES is platform-agnostic; it works with operating systems such as Microsoft Windows, Linux, and Solaris, and backup technologies from nine different vendors—automating 84% of known technology platforms and recovery strategies. Integrating Server Automation (SA) into its overall solution, Sungard AS can provision a wide range of physical and virtual compute platforms, extremely rapidly (from what used to be days to now minutes) without having to spend months writing and testing custom code.

“RES has four parts,” Ray says. “We store the configurations we want to stand up in UCMDB. Then RES, the proprietary program we wrote, reads the configuration from the CMDB to dynamically create an execution workflow. That workflow is fed into Operations Orchestration to act on it. Then, Operations Orchestration leverages Server Automation, among other tools, to automate server-side tasks.”

Collaboration Accelerates RES Development

To achieve its desired recovery efficiencies as quickly as possible, Sungard AS had an ambitious schedule to deploy to all active customers on UCMDB in two years. To accelerate its schedule and for assistance with the creation of RES, Sungard AS turned to Software Services. “Software Services understood our vision and helped us realize it with implementation and education services, as well as close links with R&D to collaborate on the software product development. The common factor across our choice of Software and services was trust in individual people with whom we’ve developed relationships for life,” Ray says.

Software Services created more than 400 workflows to automate recovery through the RES portal. Considering that Sungard AS serves hundreds of customers and each one has a unique configuration, Software Services ensured each flow would work regardless of which customer was conducting recovery tests. The services team also used aspects of Agile methodology—for example, releasing to production in a series of three to four week sprints—to satisfy Sungard AS’ wish to drive value to the business incrementally instead of in one fell swoop at the end of the project. “In one and a half years’ time we have already discovered well over half our active customer base. We couldn’t have achieved that if it was not for the partnership with Software Services,” Ray says. “I knew that if I needed something, they would be there to deliver and help me out.”

Sungard AS also used Education Services workshops, and leveraged the Adoption Readiness Tool (ART) to train staff in UCMDB, increase adoption, and help Sungard AS to realize the value of their Software investment. “It’s impractical to think that I can send hundreds of people to a classroom training,” Ray says, “so we invested in the Adoption Readiness Tool, which we use to train all of our resources. We had some out-of-the-box ART modules that we bought for CMDB and OO, but then we created a specific one just for Sungard AS. That’s pretty big in helping with adoptions.”

Results

Robust Disaster Recovery, Business Scalability, Innovation Roadmap

Using RES, Sungard AS significantly reduced recovery time by 60-65%, for improved Recovery Time Objective (RTO) performance. The ability to meet or exceed service level agreements for Recovery Point Objectives (RPO) ensures customers do not lose critical data. By reducing incidents due to incorrect recovery procedures and manual errors by

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50% with Operations Orchestration, Sungard AS increases its business efficiency while improving service to customers. The company has also increased its success rate for disaster recovery testing from an industry average of 35-38% to 95%.

“We’ve taken disaster recovery to a whole different level,” says Ray, a co-winner of a 2016 Software Innovator Award and a gold Stevie Award winner in the 2016 International Business Awards as IT Executive of the Year. “We deliver a cloud-like user experience with minimal human intervention. Results are repeatable and they deliver improved recoverability—making our customer always prepared in the event of disaster.”

Today Ray and his team are expanding RES to customer premises outside the Sungard AS network, with all components bundled and ready to deploy. They’re also extending the RES orchestration framework beyond disaster recovery to two additional use cases: customer onboarding and data-center migration. Sungard AS will be able to reuse catalogued workflows for managed-service scenarios—driving complexity, time and risk out of these processes for enterprise customers. By accelerating its infrastructure build-time for customers by an average of 70-75%, Sungard AS enables scalability for business growth.

Leveraging UCMDB in OpsBridge Solution

A colleague of Ray’s on another team is leveraging UCMDB in conjunction with another set of Software solutions—Operations Manager i (OMi), Operations Bridge, and SiteScope—to transform IT Service Management. “They’re

using it for ‘detect to correct’ monitoring, event correlation, alerting, and ticketing,” Ray says. “You can’t reduce mean time to resolution if you don’t have a configuration management database. UCMDB isn’t cool or flashy, but I firmly believe it’s the center of the ITOM universe. The key is choosing the right partner. We chose UCMDB because of the discovery patterns—the company does well when you need to circle through a lot of unknowns to figure out what’s out there—and because at the time, we needed multitenancy. Now it’s used in multiple scenarios by different Sungard AS project teams.”

Innovations Impact Future of Enterprises

Not many companies have the volume needs of Sungard AS, Ray reflects, but Automation and Orchestration Software Solutions deliver value in a range of enterprise use cases. UD discovers IT assets efficiently. UCMDB gives full control over IT environments. Server Automation automates configuration management. Operations Orchestration delivers next-generation orchestration. Software Services, meanwhile, brings the expertise and collaborative commitment to transform innovative vision into business results. “The thing I want everyone to understand is that the benefits we are achieving come not from individual products, but from the integrated solution,” Ray says. “It’s the combination of powerful software and individual people’s commitment to work alongside us.”

Because of the capabilities automation and orchestration effected through Micro Focus solutions and services, Sungard AS improves its service to customers while enabling expansion into new revenue-generating opportunities.

“We provide our customers with a frictionless service experience featuring faster recovery and reduced risk,” Ray says. “To accomplish this, we essentially reinvented the way we do disaster recovery. Looking ahead, we’ve created a differentiating foundation for hyper-innovation and rapid scalability. This not only enables business growth for Sungard AS, it empowers us to change our industry.”

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