

Migrating to the public cloud takes Accenture disaster recovery to the next level—simplifying operations and slashing costs



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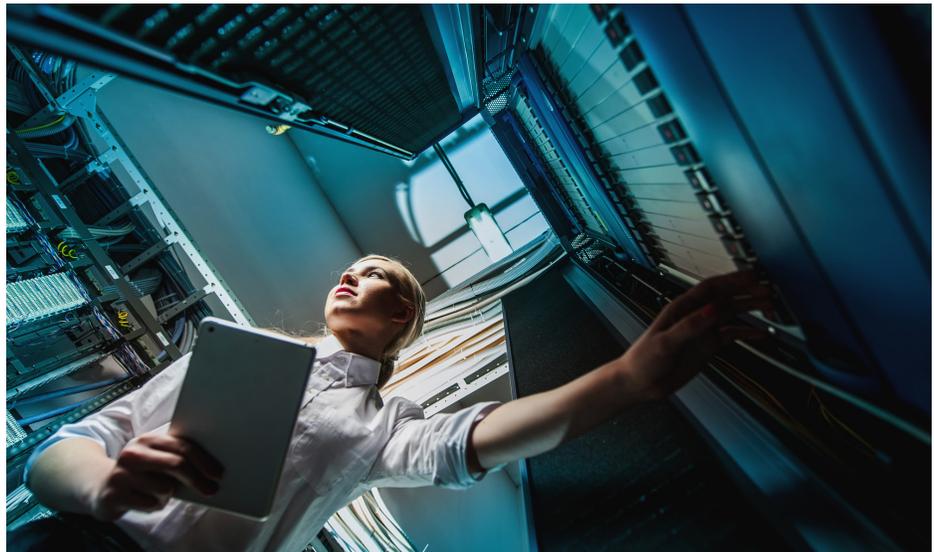
Opportunity

Historically, Accenture has performed disaster recovery of its information systems from a collocation facility. This model requires Accenture's internal IT organization to manage the facility using technical resources with very specialized skills—in effect, staffing a mini data center. In addition, typical disaster recovery requires spending budget on regular execution—a single point-in-time activity—and having to maintain hardware assets in case they are needed, which is wasteful. Even with its high efficiency, Accenture felt it could do better.

With the advance of disaster recovery solutions, Accenture's internal IT organization decided to consider cloud-based disaster recovery approaches in order to take advantage of the benefits of the public cloud. Taking disaster recovery operations to the cloud would also be in line with Accenture's "cloud-first" strategy. Given these conditions, the Disaster Recovery team within Accenture's internal IT evaluated options for a new disaster recovery solution.

Solution

To address Accenture's next generation of disaster recovery needs, the Disaster Recovery team developed four business objectives: 1) Take disaster recovery to the next level by using cloud and aligning the effort to Accenture's cloud-first strategy, 2) Scale without capital expenditure, improve manageability and increase automation, 3) Consolidate vendors and 4) Reduce cost.



"In assessing solutions, cloud presented the only option where capital expenditure was not a factor, sealing the decision to use a cloud-based solution," says Kevin Gordon, Disaster Recovery Lead. "The decision was a major one in that it meant moving Accenture's disaster recovery from a traditional collocation facility business model to the public cloud." The Disaster Recovery team ultimately chose Microsoft Azure Site Recovery within the Microsoft Azure Operations Management Suite as the solution best suited for Accenture for the following key reasons:

- **Enterprise ready** – Azure Site Recovery was able to handle Accenture's most intense application workloads and largest servers.

- **Simplicity** – A simple-to-use interface would enable seamless migration of applications and data virtual machines to Azure. In addition, disc-level protection and replication offered:

- Single-click failover
- Test scenarios and recovery drills in a safe environment
- Continuous data protection with reduced Recovery Point Objective (RPO)
- More automation capabilities for disaster recovery and disaster recovery-related tasks



Enterprise Ready



Simplicity



Cloud Economics

- **Cloud economics** – The pay-as-you-go (PAYG) cloud model was lower in cost than a co-location model. Resources are also lower cost, specifically storage, a major disaster recovery resource.

The Disaster Recovery team created two separate subscriptions within Azure with flexibility and ease in mind by setting up two network zones (VLANs). The first is an isolated testing environment, enabling testing to be performed at any time—from regularly scheduled exercises to at-will testing—without affecting production. The second is a production-like, preconfigured network zone that, in the event of a real disaster, Accenture would recover to and quickly integrate. "Having this second zone," notes Jim Szubryt, Disaster Recovery Manager, "provides the benefit of not having to perform network changes in the event of an actual disaster."

The Disaster Recovery team proceeded to install Azure Site Recovery, test the solution and then deploy it. Following solution deployment, the team migrated the scope of applications one by one through a wave-by-wave plan and timeline. The team would move an application onto the new Azure solution, recover it, and turn it over to the specific stakeholder team for functional testing. Once successfully tested and signed off, the application would be formally cut over to the new solution.

The migration to Azure was completed in eight months. "Azure made quality disaster recovery much more feasible to deploy at scale and accept across Accenture's internal IT organization," states Gordon. The Disaster Recovery team finds that Azure Site Recovery simplifies management and operations. The team has a single-pane-of-glass view and

unified experience for the entire solution. In addition, team members can use mobile devices to check status, monitor and manage operations of disaster recovery from anywhere.

Automation is built into the product, with automation now possible for such tasks as enabling protection, failing over applications and performing solution infrastructure build. "This automation reduces a significant number of tasks for technical staff, enables them to roll out new applications faster and lets them focus on core competencies instead of on maintenance," says Szubryt. "And, non-technical Disaster Recovery team members can manage the solution with no need to involve technical operations staff."

Results

Accenture's migration of disaster recovery operations to Microsoft Azure met all of the team's objectives. Most notably, the migration reduced infrastructure cost by 53 percent. Manageability improved through reduced overall complexity of the solution. In addition, RPO improved threefold. And, with 99.9 percent availability for the Azure infrastructure, internal IT has gained peace of mind.

Azure Site Recovery has greatly simplified the deployment and enablement of disaster recovery. The disaster recovery solution also greatly reduces the amount of infrastructure required, and can be deployed more easily with as little interruption as possible. Built-in Robotic Process Automation (RPA) capabilities enable effortless automation and contribute to reduced solution complexity, better service and less time required by personnel. "Shutting down an existing data center, utilizing the cloud and enabling RPA are three wins that I am excited about in

our future capability in this area with Azure," says Merim Becirovic, Managing Director of Accenture Internal IT Governance and Enablement.

The tremendous return on investment Accenture experienced with Azure Site Recovery gave internal IT a compelling business case to advance further and expand. For example, Accenture is moving ahead with significantly multiplying the number of servers to protect. It is also pushing disaster recovery capabilities to new geographies, using other aspects of Azure Site Recovery to expand disaster recovery-related capabilities, and enabling self-service as Accenture expands. Separately, Azure Site Recovery is being used by Accenture's cloud program to migrate on-premise servers into the cloud at significantly reduced costs.

The road map is to transition the Disaster Recovery team away from white-glove service to more of an engineering service model. In addition, other possibilities are being explored, including the use of Azure Backup and the potential for other groups within Accenture to use Azure Site Recovery.

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