

Casino enjoys secure, reliable data protection with AppAssure

Casino New Brunswick slashes server recovery time from days to just 15 minutes while reducing IT workload and improving guest services using Quest AppAssure



“Restores that used to take hours can be done in just minutes with AppAssure.”

*Marcel LeBlanc, IT Manager,
Casino New Brunswick*

CUSTOMER PROFILE



Company	Casino New Brunswick
Industry	Travel, Hospitality and Tourism
Country	Canada
Employees	432
Website	www.casinonb.ca

BUSINESS NEED

A manual, tape-based approach to backup and recovery was creating headaches for Casino New Brunswick. Not only were IT staff spending hours manually swapping tapes and monitoring multiple backup processes, but backup traffic was slowing service for guests. Moreover, recovering a deleted file or a failed server could take days and cost thousands of dollars.

SOLUTION

With AppAssure, the casino has reliable, secure data protection. Efficient, automated backups have reduced IT workload by five hours a week and improved guest services by reducing network traffic. Moreover, a failed server can be restored in just 15 minutes, not days.

BENEFITS

- Delivered reliable, secure data protection and full ROI in two years
- Reduced IT workload by five hours a week by unifying backup processes across the enterprise
- Improved guest services by reducing network traffic from backup processes
- Slashed server recovery time from several days to just 15 minutes

SOLUTIONS AT A GLANCE

- Backup and Recovery.

Casino New Brunswick is a four-diamond resort complex enterprise with a wide range of IT requirements for its diverse businesses, which include a full-service casino with 600 slot machines and 21 gaming tables, two on-site restaurants that service over 1,000 guests daily, a 4.5-star hotel, an on-site spa, a pool and an entertainment center. As one of New Brunswick's premier entertainment complexes, Casino New Brunswick hosts concerts, tradeshow and other outside promoted events and must meet regulatory requirements similar to a stadium or concert venue. In addition, the hotel and spa complex has both guest services and retail requirements.

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IT Manager
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In short, Casino New Brunswick's IT staff must integrate and manage everything from financial transaction processing to custom phone systems to in-house reservation systems — and everything must be secure, reliable, fast and highly available. For a secure, automated backup and recovery solution, the casino turned to Quest.

A COMPLEX IT ENVIRONMENT WITH STRONG SECURITY AND AVAILABILITY REQUIREMENTS

The casino, which opened in 2010 and employs a staff of 432, relies on having complete uptime 24/7. "Everything — from transactions to the casino floor — relies on an IT solution, so there cannot be any downtime," a representative from Casino New Brunswick explains. "For example, every hour that the gaming system is not available can result in significant revenue losses — and that's just the gaming system."

The reliability and availability requirements extend to the entertainment center and hotel as well. "When we host events, the hotel fills to capacity," the representative adds. "We have a fiber infrastructure that connects all the phones, and when the wireless network is near capacity, the server load just goes up tremendously, but it all just has to work."

MANUAL EFFORT AND COMPLEXITY IN THE BACKUP PROCESS

The casino's IT infrastructure is based on 20 physical servers — including multiple versions of SQL Server® and Windows Server® — and 15 virtual machines (VMs) with VMware® and Hyper-V™. To protect the data, the IT team had been using Symantec Backup Exec™ plus manual tape backups. But with data volume reaching 20TB and continuing to grow, this approach was no longer viable.

As the casino added a host of new services, features and physical servers to its initial setup to meet business demands, it quickly outgrew its tape backup system, which required the backups to be run sequentially.

Says the representative: "We needed a near real-time solution to accomplish much of our data backups in parallel. We were also spending a great deal of time on inefficient processes, such as manually swapping tapes twice a week and periodically dealing with configuration

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

SOFTWARE

Quest AppAssure.

frustrations. In addition, there were some incompatibilities between Backup Exec and our casino-related software that forced us to implement separate backup approaches for those applications, which introduced extra layers of complexity into our environment and created additional work for IT staff.”

HIRING EXPENSIVE CONSULTANTS AFTER RECOVERY FAILURE

Recovery was also difficult and time-consuming. Recovering data that might have been deleted or corrupted was an error-prone process that was full of headaches for the casino. “If a tape was mislabeled, we might be searching for a long time to find and recover a file,” remembers the representative. At one point, the IT staff counted 55 tapes in its inventory, and there was even more concern around recovering from a bigger disaster than an accidentally deleted file.

Those fears proven to be well-founded one day when a critical server failed — one that supports casino communications for everyone, from employees to management to the board of directors. The backups from the legacy backup solution failed, and the casino went into emergency mode attempting to bring the services back online. After the IT team determined that the corruption was caused by a hardware failure in an HP server, it needed to bring in a third-party specialist in data recovery. In addition to the costs of the downtime itself, that one incident cost \$10,000 for specialized data recovery services and software, plus multiple days of labor from the IT staff.

CASINO WAS ABLE TO MATCH ITS BACKUP TO ITS BUSINESS

Casino New Brunswick knew it needed an automated backup and recovery solution it could count on for both its physical and virtual servers, and that could scale to meet the needs of the growing business. Research and peer recommendations led the company to three vendors: CommVault, Unitrends and Quest. After a careful evaluation, The casino chose Quest AppAssure for its features, support and ability to match the casino’s backup to its business.

Reliability and ease of use were key features for Casino New Brunswick. Notes the representative: “AppAssure delivered reliability from every angle — we could specify the type of server we needed, the configuration, the type of hard drives that we wanted it to connect, and so on. Plus, the AppAssure system is built on the .NET platform, which we’re very familiar with.”

Moreover, it became apparent during the decision process that AppAssure’s support was far and away superior to other options. “Quest’s support has been amazing,” notes Marcel LeBlanc, Casino New Brunswick’s IT Manager. “They have helped us set up and run AppAssure in our complex IT environment.”

AUTOMATED BACKUPS REDUCE IT WORKLOAD BY FIVE HOURS A WEEK AND IMPROVE GUEST-FACING SERVICES

With AppAssure in place, Casino New Brunswick now has the complete data protection it needs. AppAssure efficiently and automatically backs up data across the enterprise, eliminating the manual processes and multiple backup workarounds that used to consume a great deal of time. As part of a busy and multi-layered business, Casino New Brunswick’s IT team eliminated the manual processes associated with backup tapes, saving at least five hours of staff time a week. In terms of dollar value, this is definitely in the thousands every week. “Restores that used to take hours can be done in just minutes with AppAssure,” adds LeBlanc.

The backups are also far more efficient, which enables the casino to deliver better service to its customers. Guest-facing services suffered when the previous system bogged down network communications. However, AppAssure processes all the Casino’s backups with nearly zero impact over the fiber backbone, and error logs are over 90 percent smaller due to its increased compatibility and robustness, the representative said.

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Casino New Brunswick*

RELIABLE RECOVERY IN MINUTES INSTEAD OF DAYS REDUCES RISK AND SAVES THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS

Recovery is also easy and reliable with AppAssure. In fact, another server failure enabled a direct comparison. The casino experienced corruption on the same server that had failed six months earlier. “We were about to open for the day,” recalls LeBlanc, “and the server would not come up, because one of our virtual machines become corrupt after Windows update. We went to AppAssure and had that VM back up within 20 minutes, before anyone noticed it was down.” Instead of spending days of work and \$10,000 in consulting fees, the casino recovered in 20 minutes using AppAssure.

STORAGE SAVINGS AS WELL

AppAssure has also significantly reduced costs for Casino New Brunswick by eliminating the need to purchase or store tapes, and the solution’s compression and deduplication has reduced disk storage needs. With AppAssure, the casino has no need to purchase further tapes or worry about storing fragile cartridges in a secure, environmentally appropriate location to avoid tape damage. “We have also saved quite a few gigabytes of storage through deduplication and compression, which has also reduced network traffic overall,” the casino representative says.

100 PERCENT ROI IN TWO YEARS IS JUST PART OF THE VALUE

These cost savings add up to a projected 100 percent return on investment (ROI) in

just two years. But as the representative points out, that figure only hints at the full value of AppAssure for Casino New Brunswick. “The value that Quest has brought to our organization is nearly indescribable,” summarizes the representative. “I estimate actual dollar-value payback within 24 months — but that doesn’t include the price you can place on emails, documents and other files that are difficult or impossible to reproduce identically.” The peace of mind is hard to quantify, but critical nonetheless.

“The AppAssure system has continued to grow with us as we’ve grown,” sums up LeBlanc. “We now have the confidence of knowing AppAssure is backing up what it’s supposed to back up and that I’m going to recover anything quickly and easily. I’ve done all kinds of recovery and AppAssure has never failed me. We just sleep better at night.”

ABOUT QUEST

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