Safeguarding power supply to millions with effective Active Directory disaster recovery

Quest

A major energy company ensures it can quickly restore business operations in case of disaster with Recovery Manager — and has already achieved 100% ROI from fast granular recovery.

Employees: **28,000**

Industry: **Energy**

Supplying energy to millions

For companies in critical sectors like energy, mitigating the risk of operational downtime must be a key priority. Topping the list of risks to business continuity is any event that brings down Active Directory, whether it's a cyberattack, natural disaster, hardware failure or other adversity. After all, because of the vital role that AD plays in authentication and authorization, any AD downtime could jeopardize the company's ability to fulfil its core mission.

One energy company responsible for providing electricity to millions of homes and businesses across a wide swath of the United States was keenly aware of this risk. "It's a big deal to any organization when their Active Directory goes down because the business comes to a halt," explains the lead IT architect. "Pretty much everything depends upon AD, from internal business applications to customer-facing services. So, if a production AD forest went down, employees would not be able to access our core databases or essential Microsoft 365 applications like

Challenges

Knowing how essential Active Directory (AD) is for business operations, the IT team at a major energy company routinely practiced AD disaster recovery — but with manual methods, the process took days to complete, putting both the company and its customers at serious risk. In addition, restoring just one accidentally deleted AD object took up to a full day, disrupting vital business processes.

Solution

With Recovery Manager for Active Directory Disaster Recovery Edition, the IT team can now restore the AD forest quickly and reliably. Moreover, they can recover a particular object or attribute up to 8 times faster than before. Thanks to that feature alone, the lead IT architect says, "Recovery Manager has already paid for itself."

Benefits

- Delivers fast and reliable Active Directory disaster recovery

- Slashes granular recovery time from up to a full day to less than one hour

- Has already delivered 100% ROI

- Provides flexible options for backup storage, including the cloud

Exchange. In addition, customers would be impacted immediately — if they called, they would not be able to reach a live person; they might not even get an automated answer. It would be a massive problem."

An AD disaster can quickly become a business disaster.

Unfortunately, with native tools and manual processes, restoring the AD forest in the wake of a disaster is painfully slow and highly prone to human error. It requires meticulous coordination of numerous steps: preparation, performing the restore, syncing each DC with its replication partners and making it available again, and more. Indeed, Microsoft's guide to forest recovery outlines 12 configuration procedures spanning 40+ steps that must be completed accurately on each domain controller.

The large energy company knew that this approach to AD recovery was woefully inadequate. "We performed a disaster recovery exercise every year using the Microsoft tools and methodology," the lead IT architect recalls. "It's a pretty tough process that took about two days in the best-case scenario. And if you make a mistake at any point, you have to start over, which resets the counter. Fortunately, we never had to attempt it under the stress of an actual outage. I cannot even imagine what it would be like to suffer a real disaster without a true AD recovery product."

Quick recovery is vital for business operations.

The energy company was also acutely aware that it doesn't take a full Active Directory disaster to disrupt the business — the improper deletion or modification of a single AD object, such as a user or group, can also bring important processes to a standstill.

The native Active Directory Recycle Bin is simply not sufficient for mitigating this risk. It enables recovery of only certain AD objects that were deleted fairly recently; it does not help you restore changed attributes at all. Plus, the AD Recycle Bin does not provide a change log or comparison report to help you know exactly what to restore.

"The Recycle Bin just doesn't provide the granular recovery functionality that a company needs," explains the lead IT architect. "In most cases, you have to go through a lengthy process of determining exactly what you need to restore and identifying the right backup to recover it from. As a result, restoring just one AD object often took us four to eight hours. That was a big issue for our business users, since they might not be able to do their jobs until the object was restored."

Quest inspires trust.

The IT team carefully researched the options on the market and zeroed in on their top choices. "We did a bake-off between two competitors, and Quest was the clear winner," says the lead IT architect. "We were quite impressed by the quality and reliability of Recovery Manager for Active Directory, which offers both forest-level disaster recovery and easy granular recovery."

But at the end of the day, the deciding factor was trust. "Quest is the market leader for Active Directory, which inspires confidence. Moreover, we've done a lot of mergers with Quest, so we know first-hand their expertise with Active Directory and the maturity of Quest solutions," the lead IT architect continues. "For example, I don't like to put a lot of agents on our domain controllers, but I didn't mind installing the Recovery Manager agents because I know Quest is not going to put out an agent that's going to worry me."

Deployment was quick and painless. "Recovery Manager was very simple to install and deploy, and the Quest engineer who helped us was excellent," the lead IT architect reports. "We now use the product for all of our Active Directory forests."

> " **I can't recommend Recovery Manager enough, honestly.** "
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> *Lead IT Architect, Large Energy Company*

Quest

Reliable recovery plans

With Recovery Manager for Active Directory Disaster Recovery Edition, the IT team has been able to leave behind the lengthy, error-prone manual recovery processes that put both the company and its customers at risk. "The automated forest recovery is the #1 benefit of Recovery Manager for us," the lead IT architect says. "I've done a full forest recovery in our test environment several times to get familiar with it. It has really given me confidence that we have a way out of an Active Directory disaster, if and when it comes."

Reliable forest recovery is an insurance policy that no one wants to use but everyone needs to have in place.

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"I never want to experience an AD disaster, so we do as much as possible to prevent it from happening," the lead IT architect says. "Having a solution that I'm confident will work if one does happen makes my job feel a little bit easier. It gives me one less thing to worry about."

Restoring AD objects 4x faster

While the energy company hopes never to need Recovery Manager's powerful forest recovery capabilities, the IT team has already put its granular recovery features to work on multiple occasions. As a result, the solution has already delivered full ROI.

"Recovery Manager has already shown that it is worth every penny we spent. Previously, restoring a single object that had been accidentally deleted or modified took four to eight hours," reports the lead IT architect. "With Recovery Manager, it takes easily less than an hour. That's at least a 4X times savings, which translates to significant business savings. In fact, by enabling several granular restores, Recovery Manager has paid for itself already."

Moreover, the peace of mind that the energy company has gained is priceless. As the lead IT architect puts it, "I can't recommend Recovery Manager enough, honestly."

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PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Products

- Recovery Manager for Active Directory Disaster Recovery Edition

Solutions

- Microsoft Platform Management
- Enterprise Backup and Recovery

About Quest

Quest creates software solutions that make the benefits of new technology real in an increasingly complex IT landscape. From database and systems management, to Active Directory and Microsoft 365 migration and management, and cybersecurity resilience, Quest helps customers solve their next IT challenge now. Quest Software. Where next meets now.

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