

PETS AT HOME
KEY HIGHLIGHTS

INDUSTRY

Retail

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

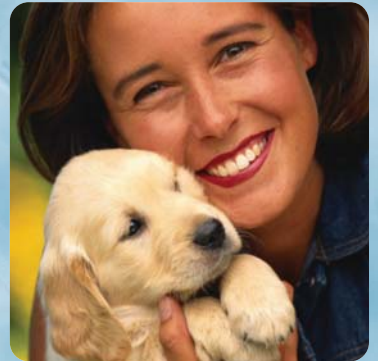
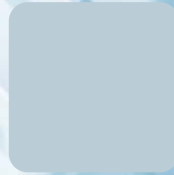
Provide scalable storage
Increase reliability of
back-up & Recovery
Reduce system
management costs

BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

Mirrored HP MSA
storage arrays
HP Proliant
Clustered Servers
HP Secure Path
Tivoli Storage Manager

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Reliable data back-up
through twin-site storage
Redundancy cover and high
availability of systems
Disaster recovery to protect
mission-critical resources
Highly scalable architecture
Reduced administration
overheads



Pets at Home matches rapid business growth with high level data protection

The customer

Founded in 1991, Pets at Home operates 155 superstores in out of town retail parks throughout the UK, and employs 2,700 people. Following the acquisition of PetSmart in 1999, Pets at Home entered a rapid and sustained period of development, with current turnover figures in excess of £300 million and an annual growth rate of 40%.

The challenge

Pets at Home's unprecedented growth over a very short period of time had a major impact on all areas of the business, most significantly the IT infrastructure.

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Jamie Lowe Network Manager
Pets at Home

The company had various legacy systems that were difficult to scale. The system architecture was based on locally attached storage and back-ups, which were not only unreliable but also costly to operate.

Multiple single points of failure also highlighted the system vulnerability and raised concerns over business continuity. Whenever data needed to be recovered, the restoration procedure was slow, unreliable and difficult to manage.

Overall, the IT infrastructure had no provision for disaster recovery other than routine off-site tape storage. There were no formal procedures in place for data back-up and restoration, or point-to-point communications links.

The solution

Before proposing a technical solution, Alpha carried out a detailed consultancy exercise to establish Pets at Home's key objectives in terms of longer-term business development. As a result, a centralised storage and back-up strategy was developed to include twin-site storage and a disaster recovery system for mission-critical resources.

Initially, local servers were attached to HP SANs, located at the company's Headquarters in Handforth, Cheshire, and at the new £6 million warehouse depot in Stoke.



Implementing HP SAN technology has enabled the IT department to react more effectively to the company's continuing expansion, and at the same time the system's highly redundant architecture ensures data availability in the event of failure of a server.

The next stage was to install Tivoli Storage Manager, which replicates back-up sets and transmits these from Handforth to Stoke on a daily basis. Using the depot in Stoke for mission-critical data gives Pets at Home a proven method of recovery in the event of a disaster.

Utilising the Stoke site has also enabled Pets at Home to provide fault tolerance for all communications links, internally and externally. A 3-way relay to the outside world via 2 ISPs with points of presence (POPs) in different locations provides a highly resilient WAN infrastructure. This ensures that internal and external users are still able to access mission-critical data should either site experience problems.

Since completion of the installation, detailed disaster recovery procedures have been fully tested and documented by Alpha and Pets at Home. These procedures have enabled the IT management team to demonstrate to the board that their business-critical systems are fully protected and can be restored effectively in the event of a major system failure.

The benefits for Pets at Home

- Reliable data back-up through twin-site storage
- Redundancy cover and high availability of systems

- Effective disaster recovery systems in place to protect mission-critical resources
- Highly scalable architecture to allow for continuing business growth
- Reduced administration overheads through centralised management of storage and back-up

The verdict

“We needed to implement a disaster recovery plan for our business critical systems, and realised it would require a high level of technical expertise and experience. We chose Alpha because of their proven ability to project manage multi-site operations, and their capacity to provide a tailored support contract for our entire business. Their skills in implementing the new back-up software to work with our SAN over two sites were invaluable. The support is second to none, and Alpha ensure that we protect our investment by keeping all levels of Firmware up to date”

Jamie Lowe Network Manager
Pets at Home

About Alpha

Alpha is a leading supplier of data management solutions. Established in 1981, Alpha provides its UK wide customer base with the peace of mind that their data is safe.

Maximising return on your investment from data management implementations takes experience, commitment and a passion for excellence. Alpha makes it simple and affordable for customers to implement enterprise class data management solutions all through a single, experienced provider.

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