

Case Study



INDUSTRY

Equipment manufacturing

LOCATION

Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin

SOLUTION

Datalink Data Continuity Assessment

BENEFITS

Translated business processes into an optimized disaster recovery architecture independent of manufacturer technology

Data continuity assessment helps drive strategic disaster recovery plan for Wacker.

THE CUSTOMER: WACKER, A SUBSIDIARY OF WACKER CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT AG (MUNICH, GERMANY)

Wacker Construction Equipment AG is a major global manufacturer of high-quality light and compact construction machinery. They provide a comprehensive one-stop offering, extending from development and production, through sales and rentals, to repairs and service – all designed to help customers increase operational efficiency. Wacker has captured a leading market position in the soil and asphalt compaction and concrete technology market segments.

The organization's decentralized IT structure is built around regional lead companies, one of which is headquartered in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. IT operations at Menomonee Falls provide central management and controlling functions for Asia Pacific, and North, Central, and South America.

The Menomonee Falls facility specializes in the manufacturing, sales, and support of equipment for the construction industry, agriculture industry, and landscape architecture. The company offers approximately 250 different products, and through a nationwide network of dealers, provides extensive rental, spare parts, and repair services.

Wacker depends heavily on its IT infrastructure to provide quality service

for finance, order management, shipping, and engineering, as well as manufacturing production systems and processes. To help analyze its customers' wants and needs, the organization also collects a great deal of statistical information regarding its distribution channels (dealers) and end users (contractors). With such a broad product offering and 65,000 SKUs, Wacker generates a tremendous amount of historical product data that must be stored and managed.

THE CHALLENGE: DISASTER RECOVERY STRATEGY NEEDED UPDATING

With data and system-driven processes playing a crucial role in the organization, Wacker has had a solid disaster recovery (DR) plan in place for quite some time. The organization implemented a DR strategy about 10 years ago that, at the time, was adequate for its needs.

Since then, the organization has grown dramatically, with more than 160 sales and service stations and 2,800 employees worldwide. Along with this growth, the amount of data that Wacker produces has significantly multiplied. David Kosinski, director of business systems for Wacker Corp., stated, "Financially speaking, we would stand to lose more revenue now than we did in the past due to downtime. Our recovery time objective is also much longer today than when originally designed some 10 years ago."

Making IT happen

A complete data center solutions and services provider, Datalink helps Fortune 500 and mid-tier enterprises get the most from every IT investment – with storage, server, and network expertise across the infrastructure. We deliver greater business results throughout, designing what we sell, deploying what we design, and supporting what we deliver.

Sensing it was time to revalidate its DR strategy, Wacker began the search for a technology partner that had a continuity practice that focused on business requirements, as well as technology offerings. Kosinski said, “We weren’t looking for someone who only understood the technology aspect of DR. There are lots of companies who have that. We wanted somebody to step back and help us develop a strategic plan that identified and prioritized the data we have, what needs to be recovered, and how quickly it needs to be recovered.” He added, “Lots of companies will help you implement the technology, but not many will help you develop the plan to determine what type of technology solution meets your business DR strategy.”

Datalink guided Wacker through a methodology for mapping a business process. Referring to that methodology, Kosinski recalled, “Datalink determined and mapped our critical business processes, defining which systems we used for the process and what our recovery objectives should be. During this meeting, we realized that some of our existing recovery objectives were very different from what we expected or wanted. We documented our gap.”

THE SOLUTION: DATALINK DATA CONTINUITY ASSESSMENT

This helped finalize Wacker’s decision to utilize Datalink for a continuity assessment. During the assessment, Datalink engineers helped Wacker define its high-priority business processes and determine which systems and applications would effectively support them. With this information, the organization was able to categorize its applications as platinum, gold, or silver levels, and develop the recovery objectives to coincide with each level.

Mike Wagner, system analyst for Wacker, stated, “We had our processes documented, but Datalink helped us match them to the applications, hardware, and software. They were especially good at picking out business processes, verbalizing what they were, and then defining which business units they affected.” He added, “Now, not only have we quantified our business processes, we have mapped which systems support each process and the individual servers that each one touches.”

According to Kosinski, with many system solutions in place, it can be overwhelming to determine which applications need to be recovered at what point. The continuity assessment helped quantify this and define it in very clear terms.

“In defining the service-level categories and boundaries, Datalink matched the recovery objective expectations to the technology thresholds and where the price points were,” Kosinski said. “At first we tended to set the service-level category ranges too close together. For instance, the price point may not be that different from a two-hour recovery to a four-hour recovery,” he explained. Datalink helped define where those cut-off points tended to lie, so that the organization could set its service-level categories to maximize value and return on investment.

With the completion of the continuity assessment, Wacker has a firm grip on the quantity of applications and data, and how quickly they need to be recovered in the event of an outage. The organization can ensure consistent access to vital data from the defined DR plan that Datalink provided. ■