

Anchor Brewing Implements StarWind as a Storage Solution for Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI)

“ The stability has never been an issue, not even a single hiccup. This is a product I would highly recommend especially in the SMB market where budgets are always tighter and utilizing hardware for multiple purposes makes the management very happy. ”

Daniel Covell, IT Consultant of Anchor Brewing Company, Founder and President of The Covell Group LLC.



About the Company

Anchor Brewing Company's roots date back to the California gold rush making it one of America's oldest breweries. Its Anchor Steam Beer is San Francisco's original since 1896. Today, the Anchor Brewing Company features a portfolio of craft beers and artisan spirits, including the award-winning Anchor Steam Beer, Anchor Liberty Ale, Junipero Gin and Old Potrero Whisky.

Pioneered by Fritz Maytag, Anchor Brewing Company has a long-standing history of preserving brewing and distilling traditions. After 45 years at the helm and having originated today's craft brewing and artisan distilling movements, Maytag announced his retirement in 2010 with the sale of Anchor Brewing to Keith Greggor and Tony Foglio. Headquartered in San Francisco, CA and exported around the world, Anchor is an industry icon.

www.anchorbrewing.com

Industry

Brewing & Distilling

Environment

VMware VDI

CHALLENGE

“After the purchase by Keith Greggor and Tony Foglio, the IT infrastructure of Anchor Brewing Company required complete reorganization”, said Daniel Covell, an IT consultant of Anchor Brewing Company and Founder and President of The Covell Group LLC. Both hardware and software were obsolete, and the IT department had to evolve the infrastructure to the latest software. “After other successful VDI implementations, I suggested the VMware VDI solution”, commented Daniel. Initially, the company decided to locate the server infrastructure in a data center in San Diego near a branch office. Fairly quickly, Anchor started growing its employee base in the San Francisco office. Daniel complained that heavy use of the head office network resources caused a substantial strain on the WAN connection between San Francisco and San Diego. However, upgrading the WAN link was too costly, and they decided to move several servers on site at the San Francisco office. They required quick SAN implementation in order to complete this task. According to Daniel, “there was not a lot of planning because of the limited time to get everything up and running. We just wanted a good performing and reliable SAN for our VDI solution.”

SOLUTION

StarWind Virtual SAN was selected as a SAN solution with the most suitable price-performance ratio for VDI. StarWind met all of Anchor's key shared storage requirements – fast configuring, simple management, reliability, and high efficiency of all storage-related processes. “Until this moment, I worked only with hardware SANs, but never used a software SAN. However, to keep the costs down and procure a SAN quickly, we agreed to try StarWind”, says Daniel.

As it was promised, the installation was truly easy and took less than 20 minutes! “We literally went with the default settings and obtained really satisfactory results”. StarWind was installed on a Dell server with Windows 2008 R2 OS using a disk bridge. This server is used as a domain controller for the site as well as a SAN for all the virtual desktops (about 40). The **StarWind Virtual SAN** architecture and its High Speed Caching feature deliver groundbreaking IOPS rates, which is extremely important for effective deployment of the VDI solution. “I worked with several hardware SAN solutions before, and now I can say that the performance of this SAN is phenomenal! It would boot up VMs in half the time that most other SANs would, and I could bring up 10 VMs at a time while other solutions would be brought to their knees,” shares Daniel Covell.

Challenge

To deploy a reliable, high performance storage solution in short terms at minimum costs.

Solution

StarWind Virtual SAN

Results

- Minimum expenses
- Optimization of hardware and network resource utilization
- Smooth work of Anchor employees within their VDI
- Reliable protection of Anchor's data SAN infrastructure
- Dell PowerEdge R710
- 1GB NICS with TOE iSCSI offload
- 16 GB RAM
- Dell PERC 6i with 512 MB cache
- Windows 2008 R2
- RAID 1 for OS and files
- RAID 10 with 6 15K SAS drives

Data protection capabilities of StarWind also delivered outstanding performance and become an essential part of a disaster recovery plan. CDP & automatically captured snapshots now provide Anchor with a real-time data backup of every change made to data. These features enable fast data restore to any point in time and ensure minimal impact on the overall performance during backup and restore procedures.

StarWind Virtual SAN was also acknowledged as a user-friendly solution, which provides centralized and simplified management.

RESULTS

Excellent performance brings the smooth workflow

StarWind enhanced Anchor's VDI so that it could deliver high performance and function at its full potential. Daniel Covell says, *"The real benefit StarWind delivers to its end users is that they don't know what is going on as far as the servers are concerned... The system has been working flawlessly for over a year now and that's all we care about."*

Meeting time and budget requirements

StarWind enabled the double duty of Anchor's hardware and delivered a reliable SAN solution for VDI at an affordable price. Fast and timely deployment of a SAN released Anchor from substantial downtime and relative loss of profit.

Enhanced data protection of critical data

StarWind guards Anchor's business-critical data and ensures its recoverability to any point in time. Should any natural or human-made disaster happen, Anchor's data will be safely restored in a matter of minutes.