TANDBERG DATA ═══

Precious metal specialist Bauer-Walser AG automates data backup with Tandberg Data RDX® QuikStation™

Precious metal specialist Bauer-Walser AG has replaced their existing tape-based backup solution with an automated data backup solution based on RDX® technology.

The new removable disk library, called RDX® QuikStation™ from Tandberg Data, allows the company to benefit from flexible scalable storage and significantly faster backup processes. With the new solution, full backup times are reduced by up to 10 hours.

Flexible backups for hard currency

Bauer-Walser AG, headquartered in Keltern, Germany, has been an active player in the precious metal sector since 1925. The company made a name for itself as a reliable and service-oriented partner for many industry sectors with their precious metal refinery and their production and sales division for semi-finished precious metal products, dental alloys, watch casings and wristbands. More than 110 dedicated employees help ensure the business success of Bauer-Walser AG. A particular challenge for the company is the daily fluctuating prices for precious metals.

Their IT infrastructure displays a traditional pattern and stability, and has remained mostly unchanged, with the exception of necessary updates. Eleven servers are in use, on which administrative applications and VMware ESXi are run, in addition to various standard Windows applications and SQL databases. For additional IT environment security, the company also employs DLT tape technology and a Tandberg Data StorageLoader. To ensure full redundancy of the backup data, all data is additionally stored on external hard drives, as the DLT solution had not always proven reliable, and backups on hard drives took significantly less time to complete.

Tapering off: Tape-based backup solution

IT Director Tim Renblad is responsible for the administration of the entire IT environment, which includes about 70 clients and 40 printers.

"Our server environment is completely stable and reliable," said Tim. "The systems can also handle the constantly increasing data volume without any problem, which means that we don't have to change anything there. Our backup solution, on the other hand, which we have had for many years, started to have capacity and performance issues in light of the ever increasing data volumes. We had

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

1x RDX® QuikStation™

7x RDX cartridges at 1TB (1x replace)

3x RDX cartridges at 500GB (1x replace)

1x Symantec Backup Exec 2011

1x Backup Server
(Windows Server 2003 Standard Edition SP2)

11x Application servers

70x Work stations

400GB data volume total for backup

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>
> *Tim Renblad,
> IT Director,
> Bauer-Walser.*

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Changeover from tape to RDX

to manually replace three tapes at each weekly full system backup. We also increasingly experienced wear issues with the hardware and tapes. Backup processes would simply grind to a halt, or full system backups performed over the weekend would turn out to be incomplete and could not be repeated due to lack of time, as the processes would already take the entire weekend to complete," Tim said.

At Bauer-Walser AG, very few employees are permitted to replace the tapes and deposit them in the vault for security reasons. The actual handling of the tape solution became increasingly difficult with growing data volumes—for instance, if Tim were not available for some reason (holiday, illness, etc.) and other employees had to be entrusted with the tape changes. As a result, company management decided to update the backup solution to minimize these and other process-related risks.

The requirement profile entailed that the new system would not only speed up the backup process, but would also automate tape replacements and provide sufficient storage space for future data volume growth. Since everyone had been completely satisfied with the Tandberg Data hardware used to date, it was decided that the company would remain loyal to the provider and simply renew the existing technology. When it came to selecting the right Tandberg Data solution for their purposes, IT partner Pegasus Datensysteme Gerd Nesch GmbH in Pfinztal offered advice. On their recommendation, the decision was made in favour of an automated solution with the removable disk-based RDX technology.

RDX technology combines the benefits of tape (reliability, portability and long-term storage ability) and disk (speed, access time, user-friendliness). The solution consists of an RDX docking station and removable RDX cartridges with integrated HDD or SSD hard drives. A robust chassis protects the hard drive within from impact damage, dirt and electrostatic discharge. In comparison with traditional tape media, the RDX media used are significantly more robust and can be deployed for a higher number of usage cycles. With approx. 5,000 loading/unloading cycles, RDX media can be written any number of times, while tape media—depending on technology—should be replaced after a maximum 350 full backups. RDX systems also offer some software features, like a deduplication function, which would not be possible with tape.

"We decided to go with RDX technology because it matches our requirements exactly. It is fast, reliable, and offers real investment protection due to its backward and forward compatibility. And we also have the option to store the cartridges remotely for disaster recovery purposes. Once we had decided to simplify our backup processes, we felt that the RDX QuikStation automation solution by Tandberg Data was the only real contender," Tim explained.

After an intensive preparation phase, RDX QuikStation was implemented into the existing IT infrastructure at Bauer-Walser AG with the help of Pegasus Datensysteme. RDX QuikStation consists of eight integrated RDX drives, which are connected to the network via iSCSI. The backup server running Windows Server 2003 with Symantec Backup Exec is connected separately for performance, and manages the backup jobs and devices. In this configuration, the removable disks can be utilised as individual drives for the temporary or permanent storage of data via drag and drop execution and can also be controlled centrally via the backup software. Backups can also be run redundantly on two pieces of media automatically to offer additional safety for unscheduled backups.

Full backup 10 hours quicker

"The RDX QuikStation by Tandberg Data has not only allowed us to expand capacity for our backup solution, but has improved performance as well," said Tim. Instead of the 26 hours previously needed for the DLT solution, a full backup with RDX QuikStation is completed in just 16 hours—a very valuable time saving of 10 hours," said Tim. "On the weekends, we have just about 60 hours to perform a full system backup, and our backup window for the differential backup during the week is eight hours. These time frames are no problem with RDX QuikStation and allow ample room for further growth."

In addition to higher capacity and better performance, the IT director sees the decisive advantage of the Tandberg Data solution in its automation. The appointment of an employee to carry out a manual replacement of the cartridges in case of illness or absence of the IT director will not be necessary any more. And Tim Renblad is very happy about the time saving, "I save around 30 minutes each day -- time I used to need for verifying successful backups and search for errors in cancelled backups. RDX QuikStation has made my life a lot easier and has given me time for other administrative work."

To date, the new Tandberg Data system at Bauer-Walser AG has been completely stable and reliable. The time savings it has achieved are significant. Due to the long service life of the robust RDX media, cost savings will become apparent in due course as well, as there will be no need for buying new tapes anymore. When capacity requirements increase in the future, management can simply purchase new RDX media to expand.

New technology—old strategy

When fully populated with the latest Tandberg Data RDX 1.5 terabyte (TB) cartridges, the RDX QuikStation stores up to 12 terabytes of data. At Bauer-Walser, six cartridges with 1TB and two cartridges with 500GB are currently deployed. Additional RDX cartridges with higher capacities offer virtually infinite capacity for the system long-term, which—in light of the company's annual growth rate of around 15%—will definitely be needed.

The company's tried and tested backup strategy with its relevant software routines will remain in place despite the introduction of this new technology, which has simplified the implementation significantly for the IT director. Various automated backup jobs have been configured for the daily full backups required by company management, in which backups will be created mainly of SQL databases, office documents, archive data, and PDF and JPG files. The full system backup over the weekend is expanded by a differential backup on Mondays of around 9GB, and each following weekday other backups of one to two gigabyte. The SQL databases are fully backed up with a delta volume of around 6GB twice a day—once at lunch and once at night.

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Tim Renblad,
IT Director, Bauer-Walser.

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