



Cost-Effective Storage and Backup Solution: Ensures that data is protected even if two drives fail simultaneously

Whalen Furniture Manufacturing Inc., headquartered in San Diego, California, produces several lines of furniture through its Golden Oak, Vas, and Hippopotamus divisions, corrugated boxes through its Whalen Packaging division, and closet storage products through Whalen Storage. Established in 1992, the company has been manufacturing and importing for the past 10 years and sells its products through some of the world's largest retailers including Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, Costco, Best Buy, and Home Depot.

"Installation took all of 30 minutes. It was very simple to install and configure. It just worked."

"It's a true multi-host iSCSI SAN solution for SMBs. ... good performance at a low cost."

"I can double my storage without having to buy a new system or experiencing downtime. That was the oh-wow feature for me." Ivan Breit, System Administrator

Challenge: Cost effectiveness and ease of management

Until 2009, Whalen's primary corporate data resided on a SCSI storage array physically attached to one machine. To increase performance for its expanding VMware environment, Whalen migrated to a high-end Fibre Channel array. The need for onsite backup led Ivan Breit, Whalen's System Administrator, to repurpose the SCSI storage array to back up everything that was critical. This included SQL and Exchange databases, domain controllers, and file and BlackBerry servers.

It worked well until a hardware failure in early 2010 resulted in the loss of all of the data on the backup array. As a temporary measure, Breit provisioned some storage on the Fibre Channel array for backups, well aware that a more permanent solution needed to be found. "An expensive Fibre Channel array was not where I wanted my backups going."

Solution: DroboElite—Simple, Flexible, and Dependable

During his research, Breit asked a former manager for recommendations. The former supervisor worked for a company that offered offsite storage services and Breit was considering contracting with the firm to provide an additional level of data protection. "He was using a DroboPro," says Breit. "He suggested it might be a great solution for my backups and gave it a strong recommendation." Based on the former coworker's advice, Breit researched and, soon after, purchased a DroboElite (now available as the Drobo B800i), which backs up six virtual machines running on four physical hosts.

QUICK FACTS

Challenge

- Need cost-effective backup solution for SQL and Exchange
- Fibre channel and high-end iSCSI solutions too expensive

Solution

- 2 x DroboElite iSCSI SAN (B800i)

Benefits

- True multi-host iSCSI SAN with dual high-speed iSCSI interfaces
- Instant and perpetual expansion
- Mix-and-match drives of different
 - Capacities
 - Set-and-forget simplicity
 - Single- or dual-drive redundancy

More About the Solution

Breit considered arrays from EqualLogic, Dell, and HP, but they were all high-end solutions. "I couldn't see purchasing another expensive, high-end storage array just for backup."

Among the features of the DroboElite that appealed to Breit were the dual, high-speed iSCSI interfaces and multiple host support. "The ability to connect multiple machines to storage lets me avoid wasted storage space...." Another important feature for Breit was the flexibility to mix drive capacities and increase capacity by simply plugging a drive into an empty slot or hot-swapping a smaller drive for a larger one.

DroboElite also delivered peace-of-mind by enabling set-and-forget management. "My time is very critical," says Breit. "With the DroboElite I don't have to pay attention to it. Since I installed it there have been no connectivity issues. I haven't had to reset it or do anything with it." Not only is the DroboElite easy to manage, it also ensures that data is protected, even if two drives fail simultaneously. With a single click, Breit switched from single- to dual-drive redundancy. "You don't want a backup solution where you lose a drive or two and you lose all of your backup (data)," says Breit.

Concurrent with Whalen's installation of the DroboElite, Breit deployed AppAssure, a backup and disaster recovery application for offsite backup of Microsoft Windows servers and applications including SQL, Exchange, and SharePoint. Data is uploaded over a VPN tunnel to a virtual machine at the remote location, which is connected to another DroboElite managed offsite. "AppAssure integrated seamlessly with our DroboElite," says Breit.



More Information

Great information on the solutions described here and many others can be found @ www.drobo.com/solutions.

To learn more about how Drobo solutions can help you, ask your preferred reseller or visit: www.drobo.com/where-to-buy.

To learn more about the Drobo B800i, visit: www.drobo.com/products/business/b800i/index.php.

For an iSCSI SAN solution with greater capacity, learn more about the Drobo B1200i, visit: www.drobo.com/products/business/b1200i/index.php.