Amvac Chemical Corp.
The Case Study

When Stronger BDR Equals Stronger Business

Sometimes in the frantic race to overcome downtime, we forget the bigger picture of backup and disaster recovery. Guaranteeing data access and protection is important but the way we get there—such as the time spent managing backups or the effort required to find useful support—can matter just as much. The wrong BDR solution can bog IT teams down in a quagmire of tedious manual upkeep; but the right solution can emancipate them to accelerate business initiatives.

That was the experience of Rainier, Director of IT for Amvac, anyhow. "In IT we don't want to complicate our lives even more," he said. "To help the business grow, you want to keep things simple."

A manufacturer of crop protection products, Amvac employs a large workforce of more than 400 employees in 8 locations worldwide. The company sells to distributors, which means most of their applications are used by their own people, from executives to manufacturing staff to an international sales team.

The company's ability to sell to and support its distributors is tied to their ability to offer world-class customer service. Any downtime can bring all service to a halt, requiring their BDR solution to be fast, simple and effective.

Complexity Challenges

To protect their resources, the team initially used a combination of solutions, including Symantec, a tape library, and Iron Mountain but not only was managing a variety of solutions a time-consuming endeavor, the support was lacking. "Part of the problem was the different solutions," said Rainier. "We had a lot of chats with our existing solutions and the response wasn't very good. We wanted a one-vendor solution with one person to call, so there would be no finger pointing when there are issues."

Despite having multiple solutions, the collective BDR performance just wasn't hitting the mark. One major headache: failed backups. "If we had to rerun a backup during work hours, our users would complain because of the hit on performance servers. We'd have a huge backup weekend and no matter how

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time we dedicated after hours, it still overlapped into working hours and everyone would complain that everything was slow. So that was a problem. We also wanted to get out of managing a tape library—that consumed a lot of our time. So did DR testing, which took months."

When it was time for a refresh, Rainier decided to look around instead of automatically renewing his existing partnerships. "We wanted something faster and simpler. It was one collective business driver—compliance, a faster system, the hardware refresh. The timing was perfect."

The Hunt for Faster Recovery

The team began evaluating vendors like Dell Appsure and Unitrends, which led to a disappointing outcome. "They didn't have the right features or they didn't work the way they said. They'd say they could throttle but then we tried and it didn't work the way they described."

When the team tried Quorum, they found its features worked perfectly. Rainier gave an example: "What I love about onQ is the throttling feature. When we start a backup and someone calls and says, 'Hey, how come this is slow?' we can just dial down the throttle—and everything works perfectly. That is one of top reason we chose onQ." He added, "Bottom line is, Quorum is so much easier to use. We don't want a product with confusing interface. onQ is so easy to use and it was the only solution that worked the way they described."

Like every IT team, Rainier and his crew needed to make the business case for investing in a new BDR solution. One factor was the timing, since they refreshed every five years. But the team also proved that Quorum represented a strong improvement over their current solution in multiple ways.

One was the ease of use and efficiency, such as automated testing. "I said I couldn't spend time managing backups, I needed to focus on the business," Rainier said. By moving to Quorum, he envisioned a future where the IT team could help support Amvac's focus on strong relationships and customer service, instead of spending time and resources on simple backup administrative tasks.

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He also did the math on what Quorum would mean for Amvac's RPO. "Downtime costs money—and with the old system, it was 4 hours to find the tape backup, then we had to rebuild the new system and make sure we have the same hardware, always a challenge with aging infrastructure. And of course you're praying the tape is not damaged." Quorum offered a radical acceleration in recovery: "Now it's 15 minutes. That kind of improvement sells the product."

Once the deal was signed, the implementation went smoothly. "It was easy to get it installed. Patrick and his engineering team did everything for us and there were no issues. They were able to answer everything we asked. And Patrick still calls once in a while, which adds a personal touch."

Quorum in Action

Rainier described how his team uses their onQ appliances. "Today we protect almost everything, from mission-critical apps like Exchange to applications servers, file servers and network servers. Almost half of our servers at each location are mission-critical and those are the ones we have provisioned recovery nodes for."

The company relies on 7 hardware appliances, hub and spoke, offsite datacenter colocation and full replication to cloud after business hours. "We backup locally each appliance and then replicate to the cloud. That extra step gives me peace of mind. If something happens, we're protected."

The impact on the company has been tremendous. "It's improved our RTO and RPO times. We no longer manage tapes and that was a big burden. Now we have more time for business initiatives instead of the mundane business of managing backups every day."

Rainier says Quorum's contribution to Amvac's success has turned him into a Quorum fan. "I'm kind of passionate because it works. I would definitely recommend it because everything they say it will do, it does. With Quorum, you can set it and forget it—and that's part of its genius."

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