

CASE STUDY

Dousing a smoking problem

A cigar company was running a risk with the way it stored its tape backups. It took a VAR to clear the air with its online recovery service

BY HOWARD SOLOMON

Like many people, Ivan Tingley used to take work home every night.

But it wasn't paperwork the information systems manager for House of Horvath, a Toronto manufacturer, importer and distributor of cigars, was toting back to his apartment.

He was carrying the company's backup tapes there for safekeeping.

"We're a smaller company," he explained. "A lot of companies use a bank vault, but that was a little much for us."

The risk was great: A unit in his building once caught fire, which could have destroyed the tapes.

Tingley also took them home because of the hours he was keeping. He regularly spent late evenings supervising and verifying the backups on the firm's outdated hardware and software.

It was a less than ideal solution, but industry analysts have been saying for years that small companies are putting their data at risk with procedures that aren't well thought out.

It's an opportunity for resellers.

It took a VAR with an outsourced backup solution to straighten out the cigar company's smoking problem.

Global Data Vaulting is a Toronto solution provider that does continuity evaluations and sells an online backup and archiving service for SMBs.

A four year-old company with less than \$1 million in revenues, it partners with accounting firms who refer customers with IT problems. That's how House of Horvath came calling in March, 2004.

Global Data president Jeffrey Beallor said the company started by asking managers to answer its standard 75-question survey about the businesses, Internet and data procedures.

From that it recommends a complete security policy, covering everything from emergency lighting to backups.

In the case of House of Horvath, it found "the IT department was doing a phenomenal job on backup and recovery. The problem was they were working with old, unsupported operating systems." — specifically an NT4 system, an outdated tape backup and balky backup software.

The company has about 10GB of corporate data on its three servers, plus 20GB of graphics.

In addition to the hours Tingley was spending to make sure the backups were accurate, it was spending about \$1,000 on tape every few months, he recalls.

For its internal operations, Global Data recommended Horvath upgrade its IT system and create policies (it didn't have any) covering employee use of e-mail and the Internet.

Managed backup

To solve the security risk to the backup tapes, the VAR suggested its managed backup service, which involves installing IBM's Tivoli Storage Manager on a customer's system. The client's data is backed up to its needs (hourly, if necessary) at a 17TB data centre co-located at a telco.

Global Data estimated it would save 41 per cent on Horvath's backup and storage costs, and could concentrate its resources on updating its systems.

Aside from installing a VPN router if necessary, the customer doesn't have to do anything for backups: Global Data uses the Tivoli software to run the operation remotely.

Data can be restored swiftly, says Beallor.

Global Data charges a \$1,500 set-up fee, plus a monthly storage charge, which in Horvath's case is \$500. As part of a sale, it provides the first 30 days of service free of charge.

Tingley's happy he doesn't have tapes on his shelves.

"Now," he said, "I've got more room for my books."]



Jeffrey Beallor, president,
Global Data Vaulting

PHOTO: RICK CHARD

HOUSE OF HORVATH

Problem: Insecure backup storage

Solution: Remote managed backup

Saving: 41 per cent under previous cost