Case Study
Peavey Electronics and NEC

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Overview

With ever-growing disaster threats, audio equipment manufacturer Peavey® Electronics has set out to improve the resiliency and security of its SAP HANA implementation.

Peavey is a privately held sound reinforcement and musical equipment company with 2,400 employees, approximately $300 million in sales, and distribution in more than 130 countries. The company uses SAP® business warehouse software to generate daily business reporting pertaining to areas including finance, inventory, and sales. Notably, Peavey uses SAP HANA® to deliver real-time inventory information to its global network of distributors and resellers; it relies on SAP HANA for up-to-the-minute product availability and inventory levels for customers. Without this information, channel partners do not have access to inventory information and might move to another vendor's product to purchase. In today's fast-paced, online-centric marketplace, this is especially a threat for Peavey.

Considering the criticality of its SAP implementation, Peavey wanted to ensure additional availability so that the implementation could withstand natural disasters and the boom in cyber security threats stemming from sources both internal and external to the organization. At the same time, Peavey could not incur additional costs, such as for increased infrastructure to perform backups and to provide incremental off-site storage for backups, or in the form of incremental staff resources to monitor and ensure data is properly backed up and stored. Ultimately, Peavey turned to a managed service delivered by NEC in order to address its availability and cyber security concerns while also taking advantage of cloud computing and storage.

Peavey Electronics Requirements

Prior to working with NEC, Peavey used a legacy approach for backing up its SAP HANA implementation that was a manual, multistage effort.

Peavey was taking both full and incremental backups of its SAP environment, but these backups were not complete because the Red Hat® operating system (OS) and SAP software image were not included. Additionally, they were manually intensive, because Peavey's SAP Basis administrator, who is responsible for managing the SAP environment day-to-day, had to manually execute the backup jobs, and then copy the backups each night to a shared storage location from which they were picked up as a part of a batch that included backups from other systems. Compounding this problem, log files were not being cleaned up; they were piling up as opposed to being automatically deleted or tiered as they aged.

Peavey required a modernized approach for backing up SAP HANA that:

- Reduced the administrative load on Peavey's small IT team, to ensure that:
  - Backups occurred without Peavey IT or SAP basis administration efforts
  - Errors in backup jobs were identified and acted upon without Peavey IT efforts
- Provided a complete backup of entire system data, including the operating system (OS), SAP HANA image, log files, passwords, and critical system boot data

- Ensured that complete system backups could occur without performance impact
- Provided additional protection from cyber security attacks
- Allowed for remote site restoration in the event a disaster recovery was required
- Provided a dashboard view into overall backup system status and service level adherence

NEC – Peavey Electronics Solution

Peavey selected an NEC UNIVERGE BLUE® BACKUP and RECOVER managed service offering that is based on Commvault® data protection software hosted by NEC on-site at the customer's data center, on NEC systems. The service leverages NEC HYDRAstor® distributed grid storage systems that are hosted off-premises in an Iron Mountain® data center. It is controlled via the NEC UNIVERGE BLUE COMMAND CENTER portal. The NEC solution is used to protect NEC's SAP HANA implementation; it coexists with agents for backing up VMware® virtual machines, that Peavey is considering also moving to the NEC and Commvault service.

The NEC – Peavey engagement has spanned multiple phases and years, with the core objectives of:

- Offloading day-to-day management of data protection to a team of external experts
- Increasing data availability and integrity as well as security for the critical SAP HANA system
- Implementing reporting tools for a snapshot into the status of backups
- Taking advantage of modern infrastructure, including cloud-hosted storage

NEC's UNIVERGE BLUE BACKUP & RECOVER service offering allowed Peavy to achieve the following:

- NEC-provided oversight over protection jobs.
- NEC-provided maintenance and support, including updates and patches that are done using a custom solution scheduled by NEC.
- Enterprise-class "complete" SAP HANA backups:
  - SAP HANA Studio-initiated full and incremental backups
  - Full and incremental backups for Red Hat Enterprise Linux for SAP HANA
- Automated data archiving
- Enhanced cybersecurity through:
  - Air gapped storage to the Iron Mountain-hosted NEC storage systems, adhere to the "3-2-1 Rule." The 3-2-1 Rule is a longstanding data protection industry best practice that calls for customers to have available three copies of their data on two different types of storage media, with one copy existing off-site for disaster recovery. It has become increasingly important as customers position against ransomware and other bad actors, both internal and external to the organization.
  - The ability to recover into a sandbox environment
  - The ability to utilize the Commvault backup agent to detect anomalous behavior that could indicate a ransomware or other cybersecurity attack, by placing a "honeypot" file that mimics the behavior of user documents to bait ransomware into encrypting it.

- Added disaster recovery capabilities (failover to NEC-hosted systems on a best effort basis), for increased availability against natural disasters and for cyber-attacks without Peavey needing to purchase new systems.
- Centralized visibility and control via the UNIVERGE BLUE COMMAND CENTER.

Evaluator Group Assessment

Evaluator Group conducted interview conversations with Peavey's Chief Operating Officer (COO) and head of IT, which uncovered the pain points associated with a small IT team supporting fast-paced and large-scale operations for a global company.

Based on these conversations, the NEC service cut Peavey's time and expenses required to implement a comprehensive backup system as well as disaster recovery for a business-critical production database. By working with NEC, Peavey no longer needed to pay its SAP Basis administrator to run backups, or systems administrators to manage and clean all of the backups. It also didn't need to worry about paying for upfront or ongoing training pertaining to the Commvault implementation. Furthermore, NEC implemented accuracy checking to ensure good backups, automation of creation and management of various backup copies to satisfy the 3-2-1 rule, as well as a self-service portal for Peavey IT staff to check on the backup environment without needing to call in – all of which further streamline processes while improving the data protection processes. Peavey's ongoing administrative requirements are further reduced with NEC being responsible for keeping servers patched and up-to-date as well as bidding on and replacing hardware as it ages – a significant factor considering how fast technology changes.

Arguably the biggest value that NEC has brought to Peavey is the ability to offload the tasks and responsibilities related to meeting Peavey's SAP data availability and integrity requirements. NEC was described as standing behind its service and being invested in Peavey's business success, stepping up to address any problems that arose in order to avoid service hiccups. For Peavey, this translates into strengthened data protection at a more attractive cost structure due to lower operating costs and IT administrative overhead.

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