Brainlink masterminds Data Protection with Veeam Direct Restore to Microsoft Azure

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— Raj Goel
CTO
Brainlink

The Business Challenge

Brainlink provides exceptional IT and business-process support to privately owned companies in the financial services and construction industries. Nearly all customers are based in New York City and include private equity, investment and hedge fund firms as well as architectural, contractor and property management companies.

Brainlink’s customers are mature companies that have survived horrific events, including September 11 and Superstorm Sandy. They’ve seen what a disaster can do to a business. They know the value of a proven business continuity disaster recovery (BCDR) strategy. Most of Brainlink’s customers opt for a cloud-based BCDR strategy, putting them ahead of the national average.

“A BCDR strategy is nothing without fast, reliable backup and recovery,” said Raj Goel, CTO at Brainlink. “We loved our backup solution, but the vendor stopped keeping up with changes in the industry. In an on-demand world, everyone expects fast recovery, but the vendor’s BCDR appliance had a single network interface card, so we could only recover one VM at a time. Recovery time became untenable, and that’s a dangerous chokepoint for an MSP. When a vendor drops the ball on product support, it’s time to find a new vendor.”

Goel said the vendor also restricted backup, replication and recovery to its proprietary cloud, which led to a second challenge: BCDR testing.

“We were spending 16 to 24 weekends each year (3,300 hours) on BCDR testing because the vendor only let us recover two of our customers’ IT infrastructures in their cloud at one time,” he explained. “This was costing $30,000 in mandatory overtime. From a business-expense perspective, that’s unnecessary, and from a business-liability perspective, that’s detrimental. We were unable to tell our customers exactly how long a BCDR test would take, and that’s unacceptable.”
Brainlink considered several solutions to replace legacy backup. Goel said his criteria was simple: Can we restore customers’ VMs to the cloud of their choice quickly and simultaneously, and does the vendor offer good product support?

“One only solution has the level of support we respect, and only one solution restores ridiculously fast to any cloud, including Microsoft Azure, which is what most of our customers prefer,” Goel said. “We chose Veeam®, and it saved our business. At the rate we were going, we couldn’t have continued functioning as a company.”

The Veeam Solution

Brainlink replaced legacy backup with Veeam Backup & Replication™.

“We bet on Veeam for our business, and we won,” Goel said. “Veeam and Azure are an unbeatable combination, and they do two amazing things for us. They make BCDR faster and better for our customers, and they make our lives easier.”

Veeam Direct Restore to Microsoft Azure lets Brainlink restore customers’ VMs fast — so fast that Brainlink broke a speed record. Average restore speed is 50 MB per second, but Brainlink hit 3.2 GB per second after working with Veeam’s support team.

“Veeam support is a shining star,” Goel said. “I get first-class treatment with Veeam compared to what I got from the previous vendor — a coach seat next to the toilet.”

Veeam and Azure also decreased BCDR testing time by 99% (from 3,330 hours to eight hours), saving the company $30,000 in mandatory overtime costs each year. Goel called Veeam an instantaneous return on investment (ROI).

“It’s obvious why we built our BCDR practice on Veeam,” he said. “It’s affordable, ultrafast and cloud-agnostic, so we can offer BCDR to anyone and grow our business.”

Brainlink backs up more than 60 TB across 70 VMs to Microsoft Azure. PowerShell scripting helps drive high-speed recovery and reliable BCDR testing.

“In a disaster, the only thing customers care about is how fast we can restore their business,” Goel said. “Veeam helps us reduce their liability.”

The consequences of a failed BCDR strategy are severe for Brainlink’s customers. The margin for error is razor thin for financial services companies. Losing data means losing customers, losing the business and failing to meet regulatory requirements, including those from the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) and the Security and Exchange Commission’s Office of Compliance Inspections and Examinations (SEC OCIE). A proven BCDR strategy is fundamental to their success.
The same is true for the construction industry. While the industry isn't subject to regulatory compliance, data security remains top of mind because of cybercrime. Employees of John Gallin & Son, a multimillion-dollar construction company, use a variety of devices to communicate on build sites, making it critical to back up and protect data. Without data, construction stops.

“Veeam and Azure help us protect customers’ productivity and profitability,” Goel said. “It’s all about saving data — and we should know. When a data center fire destroyed our servers, we used Veeam Direct Restore to Microsoft Azure to recover fast. It would have taken days to recover with legacy backup. No one should let legacy backup become a liability. Veeam and Azure are the way to go.”

The Results

- **Automates, accelerates and improves BCDR strategies for customers**
  “Veeam saved our business, restored our sanity and gives us a strong foundation for the future,” Goel said.

- **Reduces BCDR testing time by 99% (from 3,330 hours to eight hours)**
  “BCDR testing is so fast that we can complete all testing during business hours,” Goel said. “Veeam and Azure gave us back our weekends.”

- **Saves $30,000 in mandatory overtime costs each year**
  “What’s better than instant ROI?” Goel asked. “Here’s what’s better: Knowing you can meet and exceed customers’ recovery expectations.”

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