"I used to lie in bed at night in a cold sweat, wondering: Is tonight the night I get 'the phone call'? Now I don't worry. With FalconStor's IPStor CDP solution, I sleep much more peacefully."

– Dan Brinegar, Software Specialist, House of LaRose

House of LaRose

Leading beverage distributor uses FalconStor IPStor Continuous Data Protection (CDP) solution to keep everyone's glasses filled

About the Company

House of LaRose is an exclusive wholesale distributor of Anheuser-Busch products based out of Brecksville, Ohio. Family owned and operated, the company has been servicing Northeast Ohio since 1939. House of LaRose sells, merchandises, markets, and delivers Budweiser, Bud Light, Michelob, Busch, and over 20 other beer and beverage products to over 6000 retail outlets across 7 counties. This amounts to approximately *12 million cases of beer a year*.

Given these numbers, it's no surprise that House of LaRose is one of the largest beer distributors in the U.S., as well as one of the most innovate and technologically advanced, thanks in part to FalconStor.

Deployment of Advanced Product Distribution System Results in Need for Fast, Reliable Backup/Recovery

In December of 2004, House of LaRose merged its two mid-sized facilities into a huge, state-of-the-art $30 million, 300,000 square foot distribution center nestled centrally on a main road between Akron and Cleveland. "It's the biggest cooler you've ever seen," laughs Dan Brinegar, House of LaRose Software Specialist.

House of LaRose ships out between 40,000 and 60,000 cases of beverages per night, creating the need to track, store, move, and load dozens of trucks for 80 different routes. Previously they had done this manually "on paper," which was a time-consuming and difficult process.

They have since invested in highly advanced warehouse management software residing on an Oracle 10g database. "It automates the entire process of tracking orders, locating the product, receiving, shipping, moving it to the staging area, and loading it onto the appropriate trucks," explains Brinegar.

As a result of this implementation, House of LaRose is considered a technology leader among U.S. beer distributors. "We took a huge risk, and it has paid off," says Brinegar. "The system is great; it saves a great deal of time, and makes it a much easier process than it used to be. What used to take about 1½ hours per truck now takes only 20 minutes."

A challenge came to light with this powerful new system: All of House of LaRose's servers work in conjunction—which means that if one server goes down, productivity comes to a halt. According to John Thome from Chi Corporation, a leading enterprise storage solution provider, the tight system integration presents a challenge in that, "**If there's a wrinkle anywhere, the whole system can fall apart**." This could be catastrophic, resulting in the need to reinstall the entire system and its many components, and restore the backup data from tape – a process that could take days.

They received a warning on New Year's Eve, when the motherboard on their Novell NetWare system went down, costing them thousands of dollars worth of overhead and lost business while waiting for a new one. "It couldn't have happened at a worse time," Brinegar says, referring to the holiday. **"Imagine if something like that were to happen to our data."**

Industry

Wholesale/Beverage/Hospitality

Company Profile

House of LaRose, considered a technology leader among U.S. beer distributors, is an exclusive wholesale distributor of Anheuser-Busch beer and beverage products. With over 350 employees, House of LaRose sells, merchandises, markets and delivers Budweiser, Bud Light, Michelob, Busch, and over 20 other beer and beverage products to over 5000 retail customers in 7 Ohio counties.

Applications

Microsoft Great Plains Solomon, SQL Server, Access, Exchange; Oracle; Softeon ELITE; Siemens Xpression; ADP; E-Time; Novell NetWare, NetVault; etc.

IT Challenges

- Inability to replicate and rapidly restore data for complex warehouse management IT system.
- Needed faster means of restoring data from tape.
- No business continuity in the event of a hardware failure or site-level disaster.

FalconStor Solution

IPStor® CDP solution:
- IPStor® appliance & software
  - Unified SAN & NAS
  - ZeroImpact Backup Enabler
- FalconStor FileSafe™
- FalconStor DiskSafe™

Benefits

- Continuous protection of intricate warehouse distribution data and systems.
- Automated, ongoing replication: "set it and forget it."
- Rapid, simple, granular data recovery in the event of a deletion or corruption– 30 seconds to find and recover an individual file from disk versus the many hours it took using tape.
- Bare metal recovery for continuous operations in the event of a system crash.
- Reliable disaster protection and business continuity at DR site in the event of a power outage, major hardware failure, fire, flood, or other site-level disaster.

This incident illustrated the company's need to have a data protection/disaster recovery (DR) solution to guard themselves against future losses. Brinegar states, **"Our key concern is: *If something goes wrong, can we still deliver beer?*"**

That was where FalconStor entered the picture. About a year ago, House of LaRose decided to enhance its data protection, setting up a DR site for replication. With the help of Chi Corporation, they looked at "*everything* out there." FalconStor's IPStor® Continuous Data Protection (CDP) solution stood out from the rest based on its impressive functionality and value. They were impressed at how IPStor CDP offered ongoing replication and protection; the industry's fastest, most granular recovery of mission-critical databases, messaging data, and files; and bare metal recovery of entire systems in the event of hardware or software failures and site-level disasters.

"**The product was the best one that we saw, at the best price.** It fit neatly into our budget," says Brinegar. "So it was a two-fold luxury that we found them."
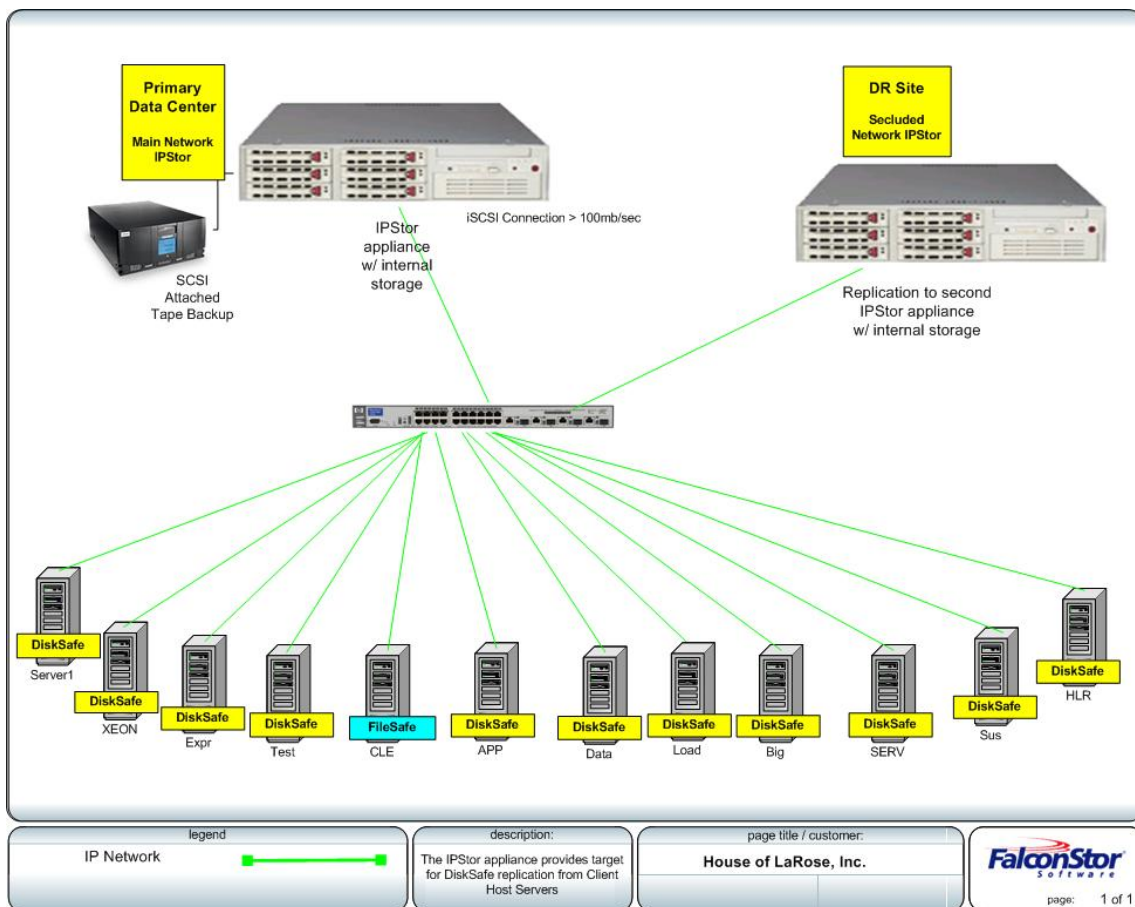
Deployment Details

House of LaRose collaborated with Chi Corporation and FalconStor to customize a solution ideally suited to its IT environment, which includes various application and database servers. The primary data of all of these servers was kept on direct-attached storage (DAS) via individual tape drives or built-in Microsoft backup capabilities, and is now collectively protected locally and remotely by FalconStor's IPStor CDP solution.

The IPStor CDP solution consists of FalconStor IPStor® software, with both SAN (block-based) and NAS (file-based) storage provisioning capabilities, running on a standard 4TB storage appliance. Host-based FalconStor DiskSafe™ software replicates the entire DAS system disks and data disks to the IPStor appliance, while host-based FalconStor FileSafe™ software replicates files and folders to the appliance, delivering centralized data protection without impacting the productivity of live IT operations. FalconStor's IPStor® ZeroImpact™ Backup Enabler is used on a nightly basis for fast tape archiving of selected servers, leveraging the secondary data located on the storage appliance. This allows backups to occur well within the allotted window without impacting the production environment.

One of House of LaRose's primary concerns is backing up its Novell NetWare system, which incorporates the proprietary applications upon which all of its employees rely, including customer, product, and accounting databases. For this reason, FileSafe is configured to run on NetWare, with the data mirrored to the IPStor appliance with snapshots taken every 4 hours. House of LaRose uses DiskSafe to back up to disk, do bare metal restores, and easily pull multiple files off an image.

On the database end, the IPStor CDP solution is synched with House of LaRose's Softeon ELITE warehouse management system, Oracle 10g running on Microsoft Windows 2003 Server, Microsoft SQL Server 2000, Oracle 9i, a voicemail-based ordering system, and Microsoft Exchange 5.5, along with its Windows NT 4.0 domain and FTP servers. IPStor CDP allows organizations to take up to 256 snapshots per LUN for continuous data protection. In House of LaRose's case, the solution is configured to take scheduled snapshots of these databases every 2 hours, along with realtime continuous journaling of changes to data.

Primary Location	*Secondary Location*
1 IPStor appliance with CDP capabilities	**1 IPStor appliance with CDP capabilities for replication**
Linux	**Linux**
1 Cisco switch	
12 application servers (Windows, Novell)	**Operating system:** Microsoft Windows 2003
Operating system: Microsoft Windows 2003	
Applications running: Microsoft Great Plains (Solomon), SQL Server, Access, Exchange, Oracle, Softeon ELITE, Siemens Xpression, ADP, E-Time, Novell NetWare, NetVault, Solomon Supply Chain Management, etc.	

Benefits

"Since the implementation, restoring files has been flawless," says Thome. "All it takes is a couple of clicks, and they're done." Fortunately, they have yet to have to do a full system recovery in their production environment – but they know they're ready, having fully tested the solution. Most of the time, Brinegar and his staff are called upon to recover a file for someone in the organization, which is now an easy process.

"It is such a blessing not to have to go through a tape archive to find data," says Brinegar, "**It only takes 30 seconds to do a restore."** He adds, "**Recovering a file is ridiculously easy… a monkey can do it.**" He likens the IPStor CDP solution to a "canned package that acts as a jar." In other words, he explains, "It is a packaged solution that is also flexible and customizable enough to allow me to do anything I need." He continues: "It is basically **a 'set and forget' solution**. We don't have to continually monitor and tweak it." This has saved them a great deal of administrative overhead.

Perhaps best of all, it has improved the quality of Brinegar's life. "I used to lie in bed at night in a cold sweat, wondering, '*Is tonight the night I get 'the phone call'*? Now I don't worry. With FalconStor's IPStor CDP solution, I sleep much more peacefully."

Future Plans

Not content to rest on their laurels, Brinegar and his IT team at House of LaRose plan to further enhance storage and operational systems. For example, the replica server that House of LaRose currently uses for DR will soon also be replicated to another area of the facility via Fibre Channel, and will serve as their new DR site. In addition, House of LaRose will soon be rolling out a test of Pocket PCs running Microsoft SQL Server 2005, which will serve as the main selling platform, as well as a platform for management software, territories, data mining software, and so on. Gathering all of this information is certain to generate a whole new level of data creation and business insight.

"It will be a big part of the business," Brinegar explains. "And naturally, FalconStor will play an important role in protecting this data."