

CUSTOMER CASE

Managed service provider protects data with Quest® NetVault® Plus

Barking Dog Communications offers backup, disaster recovery, archival storage and air-gapped backup while cutting maintenance overhead by half.



Barking Dog's customers are small-to-medium businesses (SMBs) who need disaster recovery and archival backup. They are widely scattered across a region known for heavy weather and power outages, so Barking Dog has to offer robust, standardized backup and recovery.

Their customers rely on vertical, on-premises applications and data, so they contract with Barking Dog for data protection services including backup, disaster recovery and archival backup. In sparsely populated regions like New Mexico, those services are vital for businesses.



Country: USA



Customer Desktops Managed: 700



Industry: Managed Service Provider

Solution

The MSP implemented NetVault Plus, which offers cloud-ready data protection with data deduplication, compression, replication and cloud connection.

Benefits

- Switched from shared pool of storage to multitenancy, allowing more-accurate billing and 30-percent-higher revenue
- Cut the overhead of maintaining customers' backup systems by half
- Enabled backup and archiving despite heavy weather and power outages

Barking Dog Communications is an MSP in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where backup and data protection are absolute must-haves.

Tough climate, poor bandwidth and theft

"When we have weather here, we lose power," says Greg Snover, owner of Barking Dog. "It's kind of an unstable environment. We have a lot of problems with bandwidth, too. For small companies dependent on technology, this can be a tough place to do business."

Adding to those factors is the state's high incidence of property crime, like burglary. The combination often presents a special set of obstacles to Barking Dog's customers. A company scrambling to recover data after a power outage or the theft of computer equipment can also be hamstrung by low connection speed.

Finding the right product to build a business

Most customers are attracted by the telephony services that Barking Dog is known for. Then, once they've seen the quality of the VoIP work, they ask for IT services.

Barking Dog is also a Microsoft small business partner. Sensing a market opportunity, Snover began offering backup and disaster recovery using an enterprise backup solution.

"We started out by sitting down with each customer, mapping out a customized, individual plan and quoting every backup job as a one-off," says Snover. "We put the contracts in place to provide backup and charged a monthly fee for backup storage. But then we'd discover that we weren't making money on a lot of those contracts because we had to turn and re-service them whenever there was a power outage. Also, we were providing space from a single, shared pool. That required monitoring to make sure that customers backing up, say, one terabyte weren't paying the same as customers backing up, say, seven terabytes."

Over time, Barking Dog's customers began asking for archival backup, not just real-time disaster recovery. To keep those customers happy and maintain profitability, Snover saw that he would need to switch from the backup solution he was using. That led him to Quest NetVault Plus, which provides comprehensive data protection along with deduplication, replication and cloud connection for backup, disaster recovery and long-term retention. He switched his backup solution to NetVault Plus and started moving his customers over to it.

A standardized model for data protection: Replication and multiple copies

To help their clients maximize system availability and reduce the risk of data loss, Barking Dog has standardized on a comprehensive approach to data protection. Their customers have their applications and data in four places:

- **On the server** — The customer's vertical, on-premises applications run in Hyper-V virtualization locally on Windows Server.
- **In a real-time copy** — Located next to the server is Barking Dog's backup and disaster recovery (BDR) machine, with replication of the Hyper-V virtual machine for a real-time copy of the server.
- **In an onsite backup** — The BDR also uses NetVault Plus to run a daily backup of the server.
- **In an off-site backup** — Barking Dog replicates the daily backup to a co-location site, effectively air-gapping it.

That standardized approach plays a big part in overcoming the tough environment in which Barking Dog operates.

"With NetVault Plus we can keep lots of copies of the data," says Snover. "No matter how you fail, no matter how much imagination cyber-attackers put into it, you can't get around us." Barking Dog was able to demonstrate seamless disaster recovery from cloud features of NetVault plus, giving them the confidence that even in a worst-case scenario they could be up and running quickly. "Without NetVault Plus, we wouldn't be offering backup as a service because it would be too hard to manage and take too long."



Ticking the most important boxes

NetVault Plus ticks the boxes of greatest importance both for Barking Dog and for their customers:

- **Lower bandwidth utilization** — NetVault Plus handles power interruptions gracefully, without any bandwidth-intensive rebasing.
- **Archival storage** — In a region where most customers face low bandwidth to begin with, the deduplication and compression in NetVault Plus has become an enabler for archiving. That's because far less data needs to be replicated from the client site to Barking Dog's co-location site.
- **Multi-tenancy** — Every customer's storage requirements are different. Barking Dog can now see those requirements clearly and charge appropriately for them, resulting in a 30-percent increase in revenue from data protection.

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Greg Snover, Owner | Barking Dog Communications

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- **Cloud backup** — As customers start moving to Microsoft 365, Snover will remind them that cloud computing doesn’t absolve them of the need to protect their data against the risk of loss. Small businesses such as his clients are especially vulnerable to losing data, and NetVault Plus offers Microsoft 365 cloud-ready data protection.
- **More automation** — Barking Dog is a four-person company, of whom three are technical. But by standardizing their offering and automating as much of their operation as possible, they are able to maintain more than 700 desktops for approximately 100 customers
- **Less management overhead** — “The amount of time that I’m spending per month is not even half what I was spending before,” says Snover



Making customers happy in a tough environment

Snover points to another hard fact of business life: the competitive landscape. “Finding technical people here is difficult,” he says.

As a result, Snover believes that the scarcity of technical talent is hardest on small companies like his customers. They turn to high-profile brands for data protection, then have a bad experience after a disaster. For example, they may try a well-known, onsite backup appliance; however, it won’t include replication. Or, small companies sometimes resort to online backup services, but the poor bandwidth ensures that restoring and recovering after a disaster will go prohibitively slowly.

“I would like to see more people doing better IT here,” says Snover. “Too often, new customers come to us when they’ve had a bad experience, they’ve already lost data and they’re trying to pick up the pieces. They wish they’d known about our standardized backup approach, with two fully redundant copies of their data on site and a 15-minute synchronization window.”

Plus, that standardized approach includes an off-site, air-gapped backup, which is a must-have for companies that want cybersecurity insurance — especially against ransomware.

“More of our customers are asking us to provide details about backup when they apply for a policy,” Snover says. “Insurance companies want air-gapping, so that no onsite compromise can affect the offsite backup. It’s expected anymore. If you answer ‘no,’ your premium rises dramatically. We can tick the box for off-site, air-gapped backup: that’s NetVault Plus.”

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About Barking Dog Communications

Barking Dog provides IT and voice-over-IP (VoIP) services to small-to-medium-sized professional businesses like CPAs, doctors’ offices, law firms and real estate management companies, with 10 to 25 employees each.

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