Gridstore Decreases Backup Times to Under 15 Minutes for Bell Helicopter

Customer Overview

Bell Helicopter, a Textron Company headquartered in Fort Worth Texas, is the world's premier provider of vertical lift aircraft and is an industry leader with unmatched name recognition. Founded in July 1935, Bell Helicopter was the first to obtain certification for a commercial helicopter and has delivered more than 35,000 aircraft to its customers around the world.

Bell Helicopter builds helicopters with the kind of range, speed and flexibility that, as it says, "…saves lives and helps preserve freedom…delivering those capabilities at a value that is truly exceptional." Bell Helicopter has received the accolade of being number one in the Helicopter Product Support Survey from *Professional Pilot* magazine for 20 consecutive years.

Bell Helicopter maintains additional locations in Amarillo, Texas and Mirabel, Canada. The company maintains key logistics supply and service centers in Europe, Canada, and Singapore as well as in the United States.

Challenge: Providing disaster recovery in an outsourced infrastructure environment

Bell Helicopter is constantly on an active search for data center infrastructure trends and new solutions. Drew Duke, IT Infrastructure Architect at Bell Helicopter, says he regularly talks with peers about state-of-the-art IT solutions and that he keeps a running list of those that are worth consideration. "I have learned to be guided by the principle that it is worth it to Bell Helicopter to have discussions and test solutions." It was in this open environment that Gridstore came into Bell Helicopter's view.

Bell Helicopter's IT environment is very diverse. Duke notes that as a government contractor it has amassed a broad selection of products and services. "We have everything you can imagine in our shop, from Sun to Dell to EMC to AIX on the proprietary UNIX front," said Duke.

In this particular case Bell was looking for storage for their disaster recovery site.

Gridstore fit the criteria for a backup and file sharing solution—including certification with Veeam—in Bell Helicopter's classified DR facility. As Bell Helicopter is a Textron company, 90% of its infrastructure is outsourced to CSC. "Sometimes, that makes testing an ordeal. But in this case we owned the infrastructure for DR, and with Gridstore, the system was easy to install, configure and manage. This was critical as we needed a solution that did not require

Solution Highlights

- **4TB Gridstore Capacity Storage Nodes, for a total of 12TB**

- **Veeam Backup and Recovery software**

- **Microsoft Systems Center supporting Hyper-V**

a headcount. We took Gridstore out of the box and it was working in less than a day," said Duke. "I didn't read the manual but the system was up and running in three hours. That just doesn't happen in the storage world."

Bell Helicopter's DR platform includes Veaam backup and replication connected to virtual servers. The company chose three 4TB Gridstore capacity nodes, for a total of 12TB installed, pulling the backup from Veeam via Fibre Channel. Bell Helicopter is using all of the capacity Gridstore provides and plans to expand.

Solution: Bell Helicopter's Gridstore experiment brings great results at an affordable price point

Bell Helicopter needed structure in its diverse IT environment. "We have too much information, which is not unusual for a government contractor," said Duke. Gridstore has now been installed at Bell Helicopter's DR site for nine months and it's been running "perfectly."

The benefits of Gridstore are clear to Duke, who reports, "I asked myself, from a cost perspective, does Gridstore meet our objectives? Does it back up and how much time do I and my team spend maintaining it? I can say that with Gridstore the value was there, and there is no need for heavy maintenance time each week. It just goes. That's a testament to Gridstore's ease of use and value."

Additionally, Duke discovered the Gridstore solution improved performance substantially. Previously, backups were taking too long and recovers were taking even longer. Now, with Gridstore, Bell Helicopter is able to complete its backups in under 15 minutes, and restore in only a few minutes more.

Results: Gridstore saved Bell money and improved backup and restore performance

Bell Helicopter has seen several benefits in its Gridstore installation:

■ The installation of Gridstore took a matter of hours rather than weeks. To be operational quickly translated to significant cost savings for Bell Helicopter.

■ Management simplicity and reliability has meant no additional staff needed.

■ Backup takes only 14 minutes and restore 18 minutes.

"Our next steps with Gridstore include jumping to higher capacity nodes," said Duke. "We started with the recommended three nodes and we were quickly using it all. Because Gridstore was so easy to install, configure and manage we will be adding nodes in the near future."

Results Highlights

■ **Ease of installation and use**

■ **Up and running with minimal maintenance**

■ **Dramatically improved performance**

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> Drew Duke
> IT Infrastructure Architect
> Bell Helicopter

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