



STORAGECRAFT®

Backup Fast, Recover Faster

CASE STUDY: STORAGECRAFT IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

CHECK-IN

The hotel and hospitality industry has needs unlike any other.

Hotels make sure people from all walks of life have a comfortable place to stay while they're traveling. Each guest needs a clean, quiet room to sleep in and a bed with fresh sheets. At the same time, the same guest might want room service at any time, day or night, and he or she probably expects Internet access, television, a telephone, and so on. Meanwhile the hotel staff needs security and a way to manage all the systems required to live up to these expectations.

In the case of large hotel chains, providing the systems that allow for these amenities and management requirements is just the beginning because these needs aren't restricted to a single property. Every property in the chain has to be taken care of and for large hotel groups, this could be thousands of locations.

In some cases, each property depends on its own server to control and manage everything that's happening in the hotel. Larger chains might have hundreds or even thousands of servers across the country handling things like check-ins and check-outs, customer management, billing and financial transactions, communications, and so forth.

Keeping this equipment running is paramount and when you've got thousands of servers to keep at maximum uptime, you need someone with the chops to handle it. That's why you need someone like Mark Moore.

Mark Moore is the technical advisor for a massive international hotel company that boasts over 4,000 hotels in over 100 countries. Mark stands at the helm of all technical operations in the United States and expects to be in control of about 3,000 servers in the US, Canada, and Latin America by the middle of year. With twenty-five years in the IT industry, and with most of those being in the hotel industry specifically, it's fair to say that Mark knows all there is about their technology requirements.

Mark is responsible for making sure everything on the technology end is working smoothly for each hotel property, which can be quite a task. As he puts it,

[Hotels have] a consistent type of need. If you look at similar businesses—franchises and things that are multi-location like McDonalds or Starbucks anything that has a lot of distribution points and branch office facilities—you'll see that they have a lot of the same issues.

WAKE-UP CALL

Remember that with a hotel chain like the one Mark's responsible for, one team of IT administrators might be responsible for hundreds—even thousands—of servers.

The only way to avoid critical problems in such a large environment is to put systems and procedures in place that make the environment resistant to downtime.

For example, one crucial part of the business continuity plan is the software that keeps it all running, and finding the right solution can be tough. In fact, Mark used a variety of products—including a variety of image-based and tape backup solutions—but eventually his needs outgrew the abilities of those products.

The reason we were looking for another solution was that as we migrated standard BIOS machines to EFI machines, the other products didn't work with those particular configurations. We tried to work with the development team of one vendor we worked with, but they were about a year away from having a working product so we started looking for an alternative. ShadowProtect bubbled up to the top.

Right now, Mark and his company uses StorageCraft® ShadowProtect® across the board in the US, trusting ShadowProtect Server to handle the backup imaging for hundreds of servers.

Mark uses ShadowProtect on each server at each hotel, but he also uses it to protect servers before they are shipped to various properties by snapping an image of each one at

a staging facility before it's sent out. This safeguards each server in case there's an issue in transit.

We snap an image before the server leaves the staging facility. We've had a couple of servers that have had various issues in shipping. We backup to a USB drive locally connected to the server, so that the USB drive and server both get shipped. Once we've got the hardware issue fixed, we can recover from that image so the server is back the way it was when it left the staging facility.

ShadowProtect has also made it really simple for Mark and his team to recover failed machines currently in use on a property.

We've had one or two incidents where there's been a failure where there's a problem with the server after it's been running at the property. In one case a RAID controller went bad and we had to recover the image as well.

Plus, Mark and his team can usually recover any down servers very quickly.

Usually it's around two to four hours with ShadowProtect. Once the hardware is fixed and operational, our target is between two to four hours.

HOUSEKEEPING

For Mark, the tough thing isn't usually recovering from backup images made by ShadowProtect, it's making sure those backups happen in the first place.

When you're responsible for backups of thousands of servers, it's tough to make sure they all kick off and conclude each time without error, especially if you need to trust the managers of the individual properties to pay attention to the systems.

While backups are important, they aren't on the mind of hotel managers—until a problem starts costing them money. Mark says that when server issues start affecting the efficiency of operations, then there's trouble,

I've had some of the general managers claim that they lost ten or twenty thousand dollars because they could never recover some of the in-transit revenue—charges that haven't yet been posted to a credit card—but a lot of it is the operational efficiency. Getting all that data back up and running and the time it takes is really what affects them.

So in order to make sure things are happening as planned, Mark uses the free monitoring and management tool StorageCraft® ShadowControl®.

We're in a weird situation. It's really the responsibility of the hotel to validate that backups are running and working. [The hotels] are supposed to call us if they've got a problem, but of course, most of them don't, so our guys will look at the ShadowControl console from a support perspective, find the ones that haven't been backed up the longest and give them a call.

Mark does his best to keep track of everything, but occasionally some servers don't get backed up as often as they should.

We actually found one hotel that hadn't taken a backup in forty-four days. So our guys went in and took a look at that.

ShadowControl informs them of any problems that might arise, even with a large number of backups.

I think of the nearly 1,100 we're tracking via the console, we've only got about ten or fourteen hotels that are more than a couple days from the last backup. The command module works really well.

THE FRONT DESK

Of course, any great solution has two pieces: the digital side (the software itself) and the human side (sales and technical support).

Mark found that not only does StorageCraft have a useful solution for backups, they also have a great team of people supporting it:

One of the advantages I've experienced with StorageCraft is that they have much better customer service and sales support as far as responsiveness and everything like that. With the other companies I've used, it's hard to get answers and hard to get support—it's much better to deal with a company whose backup solution is a more strategic product for them. Any minor problems we've had have been fixed. Support has been very responsive helping us look at what some of our problems have been.

Not only that, but Mark was able to roll out the solution to all of the properties for a good price,

The pressures tend to be price. One of the big things with ShadowProtect was that we were able to get a good product at a good price with all the maintenance we wanted.

When it comes to getting a good night's rest, it takes different things for different people. For hotel guests, it's simple: they need a quiet, comfortable place to snooze while they're traveling for business or pleasure. But when you're responsible for the technology needs of hundreds of hotels, you need a little more to keep you at peace.

A person like Mark, who is responsible for a range of technology services, needs to know that all of the systems he's responsible for are working the way they're supposed to, and that each of those is being protected by not only great backup imaging software, but a team of talented technical support individuals ready to serve at a moment's notice. It's safe to say that using StorageCraft has allowed Mark to get the rest he needs.

ABOUT STORAGECRAFT

At StorageCraft®, the goal of complete disaster recovery drives everything we do. Our StorageCraft® Recover-Ability™ solution is an end-to-end, best-in-class backup and disaster recovery solution that is both fast and reliable.

STORAGECRAFT RECOVER-ABILITY

It starts with a good backup. Our award-winning *StorageCraft® ShadowProtect®* takes complete, pristine images of your machines, including all your operating systems, applications, services, and settings.

It then records changes at the sector level, so you always have an up-to-date copy of every machine in your IT environment, whether it's a critical server or an employee laptop, physical or virtual. We even work with specialized database servers, like SQL, SharePoint, or Exchange. You can get granular recovery in Exchange with *StorageCraft® Granular Recovery for Exchange*.

You have complete control over the frequency of your backups and you can set rules for consolidation and retention to manage your precious storage space using *StorageCraft® ImageManager™*.

Plus, with *StorageCraft® ShadowControl®* you can monitor the machines in your backup environment from a single interface and get alerts when a machine is running out of

space, when a backup doesn't happen, or when any of a variety of conditions you specify is met.

We also give you tools to test your backups using *StorageCraft® VirtualBoot™* and *StorageCraft® Image-Ready™* technologies, which gives you confidence that your data is safe and that a disaster won't shut you down or hold you up.

Then we make it easy to replicate your backup images with *StorageCraft® Cloud Services™* or to our cloud or to your own offsite location so you can always have your data close when you need it and at a good safe distance when a disaster comes.

When it does, you can launch your backups as virtual machines with VirtualBoot or mount them as drives for complete, granular access to your data.

Or you can pre-stage the recovery of a backup image in a virtual machine with our patented *StorageCraft®*



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HeadStart Restore® technology, so if your main server blows up, you can be up and running in minutes. You can even virtualize your data in our cloud so even Mother Nature can't keep you down.

Then, you can rebuild your infrastructure and recover to all kinds of machines, physical or virtual, using our *StorageCraft Hardware® Independent Restore™* technology or *ShadowProtect IT Edition*.

You can't be sure what kind of disaster will strike you next, but with the StorageCraft Recover-Ability solution, you can be sure it doesn't matter. You'll be just fine.