

Leadway Pensure Protects Microsoft SQL Server with Zerto Virtual Replication

“A Miracle for BC/DR”

Leadway Pensure is a pension fund management company that has several mission-critical applications to protect, including Microsoft SQL Server, financial applications and custom built applications. If any of these applications becomes unavailable, there could be a financial impact on the fund and its participants. The company evaluated VMware vCenter Site Recovery Manager (SRM) with vSphere Replication but after a very complex installation process, the team realized that this solution could not keep up with the high number of transactions SQL Server executes on a daily basis. Zerto Virtual Replication installed quickly and easily, working as advertised. Simple testing showed that aggressive service levels could be met with recovery point objectives (RPOs) of seconds, and the environment was still protected during the non-disruptive DR testing. Most importantly, Zerto Virtual Replication was able to effectively replicate and maintain the BC/DR environment for SQL Server and support its rapid rate of change.

The Problem

Leadway Pensure is 95 percent virtualized. It embarked on its virtualization journey to conserve space, reduce power and cooling costs, but most importantly, to simplify BC/DR. Through virtualization, it was expected that the production environment would be up and running quickly. Leadway Pensure started to implement VMware vCenter Site Recovery Manager with vSphere Replication and could not get it to work. The initial synchronization took too long and due to a lack of bandwidth optimization, replication was not able to maintain a consistent RPO in line with the requirements of the business.

Uzah Chinedu, Infrastructure Manager at Leadway, began searching for a new BC/DR solution. The company evaluated Veeam, Doubletake and Zerto Virtual Replication. Veeam's snapshot-based replication was consuming too much storage at the production site, DoubleTake was unable to meet the SLA and failback was a manual process which was a deal breaker.

Protecting SQL Server is challenging. The database often has a rapid rate of change that needs to be maintained to ensure application consistency. Many BC/DR solutions fall short with this challenge as they leverage snapshot-based replication technologies and therefore cannot keep up with the high number of transactions that SQL Server is executing. Additionally, write-order fidelity needs to be ensured so that the application can be recovered. If there is no application-consistent recovery point available, another solution must be used, which usually takes much longer to recover and with significantly more data loss.

Challenges

The business continuity solution must:

- Deliver robust protection for SQL Server
- Replicate a 2 TB VM efficiently and support its rate of change
- Ensure write-order fidelity across VMs
- Allow for testing with no impact on the environment

Solution

The Zerto Virtual Replication solution:

- Delivers RPOs of seconds
- Captures all changes with continuous block-level replication
- Effectively recovers applications while maintaining write-order fidelity
- Simplifies testing - with non-disruptive, low-impact DR testing

“When I first heard about Zerto (Virtual Replication) I was skeptical. Now that we have it deployed, I call it a miracle for BC/DR. We have very aggressive service levels to meet – we must have our mission-critical applications up in 15 minutes. With Zerto, we are able to recover our Microsoft SQL Server database, Exchange, File servers and other applications well within our SLA.”

— Uzah Chinedu, Infrastructure Manager,
Leadway Pensure PFA Limited

Why Zerto Virtual Replication?

Leadway Pensure's main reason for selecting Zerto Virtual Replication was very simple – it worked. After working with three solutions and having challenges with all three – the solution, Zerto Virtual Replication (ZVR), that delivered effective BC/DR for the environment is the one the company selected. The key reasons for selecting ZVR are:

- **Aggressive recovery point objectives (RPOs) and recovery time objectives (RTOs):** ZVR delivers RPOs of seconds and RTOs of minutes, so applications are available quickly and with minimal data loss.
- **Simple disaster recovery testing:** Testing the BC/DR process is simple and can be done with just a few clicks, giving peace of mind that the solution will perform as advertised and information and applications will be protected. During testing the production environment is still protected so there are no vulnerable moments – even during testing. This was key for Leadway Pensure, as testing the environment is critical, and the environment must be protected throughout the test.
- **Automated failover and failback:** Automated failover and failback is simple and easy to execute. Many other BC/DR products will failover the information, but when the production site is back up and running, it is very challenging to move everything back. Zerto Virtual Replication involves just one-click for failover and one-click for failback.
- **Point-in-time recovery with the journal:** Having several recovery points to failback to not only provides options, but provides confidence. There are several application consistent points that can be leveraged ensuring the business is up and running at a point that makes sense and supports productivity. As Zerto maintains the write order of changes in a journal it removes any need for SQL Server log shipping. The ability to recover SQL Server to a previous point in time is now accomplished using a simple time slider rather than the previous complicated replaying of SQL logs.
- **Continuous, block-level replication:** Changes are sent to the target site as they occur, in small compressed packets. This is more efficient for keeping up with high rates of change in large SQL servers and delivers minimal data loss.
- **Simple management:** The product is so simple to use that even junior administrators are able to set up VPGs, run DR tests and manage the software. It plugs right into VMware vCenter, keeping management centralized and simple. Leadway Pensure was looking for a BC/DR solution which was not complex, and they found the simplicity of ZVR almost too good to believe.

“The testing capability is really remarkable. We have run two full DR tests in the last six months which involved the entire organization. The product performed beautifully and we are fully confident in our ability to recover. DR testing with other solutions was so complex, we couldn't test! It gives us great peace of mind that replication is still occurring, even during testing, and we are never exposed.”

— Uzah Chinedu, Infrastructure Manager, Leadway Pensure PFA Limited

About Leadway Pensure

Leadway Pensure PFA Limited is a Pension Fund Administration Company that provides a range of Retirement support services to our numerous customers in every part of Nigeria.

“The support I had during the installation was wonderful. I wanted to do this on a Sunday morning and the Sales Engineer was more than willing to accommodate my schedule. Zerto does not have just a great product, they have a great team!”

— Uzah Chinedu, Infrastructure Manager, Leadway Pensure PFA Limited

About Zerto

Zerto has developed the first hypervisor-based, disaster recovery and replication software for virtualized environments, offering simplicity and greatly reduced operational and maintenance costs. Developed exclusively for virtualized and cloud environments, Zerto's award-winning solution, Zerto Virtual Replication (ZVR) is rapidly becoming the standard for disaster recovery and business continuity in the modern data center. ZVR received 'Best of Show' at VMworld 2011, as well as 2012 and 2011 'Product of the Year' Gold Awards. For more information, please visit: www.zerto.com. ■

Zerto

Contact us today to learn more or request a free trial at www.zerto.com or info@zerto.com.

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