

Club Assist Recharges Its Data Protection Efforts With Cloud Based Backup and Recovery

90%
reduction in
management time

Data restores from
hours to minutes

64%
cost savings vs.
native AWS



Challenge

As a longtime leader in the automotive industry, Club Assist has recently been modernizing and centralizing its IT infrastructure to better support a growing business and expanding clientele.

As the Preferred Supplier for the American Automobile Association (AAA) and Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) Mobile Battery Program, Club Assist provides a full-service approach to car battery service. They not only provide batteries for these motoring Clubs' Members: Club Assist delivers a comprehensive approach to support AAA/CAA Clubs with services including training, marketing, and online applications to help their Battery Service Providers fit and install batteries correctly, while efficiently analyzing sales.

In 2019, the company centralized its North American operations, basing its IT team at the corporate headquarters in Lake Mary, Florida. This effort included moving as much of the infrastructure as possible to the cloud, in particular to AWS, which allowed Club Assist to close its Ottawa-based data center. "We pretty much upgraded everything," said Gary Bowers, who joined the company as Director of Network Services in the midst of the transition. "By the time I joined, we had very little left on premise," said Bowers. "We had a very small VMware farm here in the office, and that's about it for on-prem infrastructure."

One of Bowers' early challenges was getting a handle on the company's data protection solutions. Given the importance and variety of the data—from sales information to the company's online customer applications—it was a needed improvement. "We had a mix of backup strategies," explained Bowers. "Frankly it was kind of a hodgepodge. We were using native AWS snapshots, and with a Snapshot manager they functioned okay, but were costly and very cumbersome. And we were using CloudBerry as well, and it was limited."

INDUSTRY

Automotive Services

USE CASE

AWS Data Protection, IT Modernization, Move to the Cloud

BENEFITS

Lower TCO, Simplified Backup Management, Eliminate Reliance on Snapshots, Air-Gapped Backup

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Gary Bowers

Director of Network Services, Club Assist

Objectives

Bowers knew his company's backup and recovery was still stuck in the past, but in the beginning, he didn't have a lot of time to focus on making these updates.

At first, Bowers just dealt with his backup issues as is, focusing on improving the company's existing approach to data protection. He made some incremental changes here and there to simplify things, and cleaned up the company's old snapshots as best he could. But it wasn't what he really wanted: it was still challenging and costly.

Here is Bowers' ideal backup solution:

- Provide an innovative approach for backing up data to the cloud
- Drastically reduce complexity and unify data protection
- Create real, hard dollar savings from reduced infrastructure
- Deliver added protection against ransomware and other cyber attacks

“Clumio is on my short list now. They are truly disruptive and game changing. It's a bit of a cliché, but Clumio just works. It's simple and it simplifies our IT.”

Gary Bowers

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Solution

A trusted vendor recommended that Club Assist check out Clumio's backup as a service. All it took was an effortless POC and some impressive TCO numbers to convince IT leadership that Clumio was the way to go.

At that point, one of his trusted vendors, GreenPages, came up with an intriguing proposal. “We were talking about different technology, different solutions, and they asked if I had heard of Clumio's backup as a service,” Bowers said. “I had not, but I am always willing to hear about opportunities for cost savings and efficiency, and I told my rep I was willing to check Clumio out.”

Although Bowers was immediately excited about the possibilities of Clumio, he did investigate other offerings as well, including Veeam. However, none of the other approaches to simplifying his backup and recovery proved worthy. “Unlike Clumio,” said Bowers, “even their proof of concepts were challenging and would have been an effort to complete. Clumio was truly a no-brainer, both to do the POC and to finally purchase.”

Lower TCO

As part of the proof-of-concept exercise, Clumio shared a TCO study with Bowers, which had been completed for AWS users. “They had a set of savings for early cloud adopters and a set for more mature cloud adopters,” recalled Bowers. “And for us, as mature cloud users, the numbers turned out to be completely accurate. I was impressed by how forthright and spot on they were.”

Several months after the Clumio implementation, Bowers was able to verify the predicted cost savings. “I am monitoring our cost savings today,” Bowers explained, “and what they will look like in the future when I am totally done with my AWS snapshots. That number, conservatively speaking, is going to be about a 64 percent savings.” And, according to Bowers, that's just the hard dollar savings. There is also significant indirect savings that will accrue from reduced management time.

Unified Management

For Bowers and Club Assist, Clumio's authentic SaaS has been a transformational experience for backup and recovery. "Honestly, Clumio is the best of both worlds," explained Bowers. "I have total control over my backup. I can set the timing, the policies, and the retention myself, but I don't have to deal with the day-to-day issues. Clumio handles that for me."

An essential part of the Clumio experience, and a key feature for making backup and recovery easier for Club Assist, is Clumio's ability to unify management. "There is great value in Clumio's single pane of glass," Bowers stated. "It's obvious, but being able to set and manage policies from one console is a tremendous benefit."

Now, with backup management time dramatically reduced, Bowers and his team can focus on other IT issues. There is still a lot of work to be done in centralizing IT and building processes that can strategically support the business as it grows across North America.

Ransomware Protection

Even before Bowers started at Club Assist, data protection was a key focus for the organization. They had seen a growing number of ransomware attacks in various Club Assist markets, and it was crucial to defend themselves against potential attacks on their own data. Prior to moving to Clumio, there was significant danger from cyber attacks since the AWS snapshots didn't separate the backup data from the production data.

About Club Assist

Club Assist is committed to providing clients with state-of-the-art batteries and services to keep them ahead of the ever-changing automotive industry. They offer cutting-edge marketing services, Battery Service Technician training, along with products and technology. As the Preferred Supplier for the American Automobile Association (AAA) and Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) Mobile Battery Service Program, Club Assist partners with AAA/CAA Clubs in support of their more than 60 million members.

Learn more about Club Assist at www.clubassist.com

According to Bowers, that has all changed now with Clumio. "From a security perspective," he said, "Clumio's air-gapped backup gives us the added protection we need for our data."

Results

Within a year of bringing Clumio on board, Club Assist not only expects to see a 64 percent reduction in hard costs to run their backup, but also as much as a 90 percent reduction in time spent managing backup.

The future is bright for Club Assist as it continues its journey to modernizing IT. As it implements new and needed changes, the company knows that Clumio will be there innovating and providing the best possible data protection.

For Bowers, Clumio is one of only a couple IT vendors that really stand out with their innovative approaches to solving technology and business problems. "Clumio is on my short list now," he said. "They are truly disruptive and game changing. It's a bit of a cliché, but Clumio just works. It's simple and it simplifies our IT."

As Bowers looks to the future, Clumio will be part of his ongoing cloud-first strategy. "We have been upgrading our SQL servers and moving rapidly to increase our use of AWS RDS," he explained, "and we expect Clumio to provide data protection there as well. To be honest though, what we have now does everything we need and gives us far more than what we had before. So, anything extra that Clumio adds, and I know they will continue to innovate, is just icing on the cake."