

## GAINING TIME AND MONEY

### A Gerling UK case study

#### Gerling UK 'At a Glance'

- Industrial Insurance and Lloyds syndicate
- Multiple sites in London and Birmingham with other Gerling operations worldwide
- 150 employees within the UK
- The company originated in Germany in 1904
- Client for Vaulting Services 'TeleVault and SunGard Professional Services' Business Continuity Planning
- Supported via SunGard's London Technology Centre, City Recovery Campus and ScaleNet
- [www.gerling.co.uk](http://www.gerling.co.uk)

#### Background info about Gerling UK

Gerling has operated in the UK for over fifty years. They are an important player in the London Insurance Market in the property, casualty and engineering markets. In 2002 they wrote £227m of premium, around 13% of the total premium written by Gerling General Insurance worldwide. In addition they also have a Lloyd's of London operation writing £55m of property and professional indemnity business. A complement of 120 staff support a top quality underwriting, claims management and risk management operation supplying risk management solutions to industrial and large commercial clients. Gerling have first class relationships with the major broking houses and with investment grade reinsurers.

#### Growing pains

Like many organisations, Gerling UK had an in-house backup regime, which served them well for many years. However, when the company underwent a period of considerable growth, it became clear that an alternative approach might be required. "During the course of 1999/2000, we experienced strong growth in both organic and acquisition terms, adding a Lloyds Syndicate to our UK operations. As might be expected, such concentrated growth created something of a challenge for our future IT infrastructure development plans," explains Justin Shagam, IT Manager for Gerling UK. "As part of the process of preventing an unmanageable situation going forward, we decided to review our long-established backup process in the belief that we could create time and cost savings."

Thus, in a bid to maintain the necessary control, co-ordination and integrity of future backups for the expanding organisation, Gerling UK investigated SunGard Availability Services' TeleVault solution.

#### Electronic data vaulting

TeleVault – one of a number of electronic data vaulting (EDV) solutions available from SunGard's Vaulting Services division – is particularly suited to centralised data

environments, such as that of Gerling UK. “We have a central IT infrastructure composed of Windows, Novell and Microsoft Exchange servers; via this we provide services to 150 users across three locations in the City, our Lloyds syndicate and a base in Birmingham,” explained Shagam.

Further to a review of TeleVault’s capability, Gerling implemented the solution in October 2000. For Shagam there were no qualms about moving from traditional offsite storage to EDV: “By opting for an automated offsite backup process, Gerling has reduced backup times and media costs. We used to lose the first hour of every day tending to manual backups – assuming there were no problems or mishaps – but TeleVault spares us this, as well as eliminating the problems associated with human error and tape administration.”

The fully managed TeleVault service automatically transmits data offsite – via secure, high-speed communications links – and stores it online in two locations within SunGard’s secure data vaults. Following installation of the relevant dedicated communications links and software, the overall system is then configured in accordance to the customers’ specification. Hence, Gerling was able to determine the servers to be backed up, the frequency with which backups occur and data retention periods.

This flexibility is important to Gerling, “I work with a number of companies of a similar size to SunGard, but rarely do I find them to have a similar flexibility and open-mindedness,” commented Shagam. “SunGard’s approach has enabled me to be innovative with the services and technologies I’ve adopted for Gerling and on this occasion, it has enabled me to select the data storage criteria and availability solutions that best meet our business and budgetary requirements. And by being able to store data on an individual basis, I can advertise to my users a greater degree of service flexibility for them than was previously possible”

TeleVault works by conducting a complete full backup on the first occasion with subsequent backups recording changed data only, thus accelerating backup times. In addition, customers receive a daily email report to confirm all backup activities for management information as well as added peace of mind.

### Not just backups ... but recovery too

As an organisation that has invested in business continuity planning for some time, Gerling appreciated that TeleVault would deliver benefits for its file and server restore process, as well as providing an ideal base for IT disaster recovery processes. Companies that engage TeleVault in conjunction with SunGard’s business continuity provision have only ‘one button to press’ during disruption or interruption to normal operations. When ‘disaster’ occurs, TeleVault personnel will restore client systems - including the operating system - from the backups made by the service to SunGard’s disaster recovery systems. So rather than having to go to an offsite store during a disaster to retrieve tapes which then have to be taken to the recovery location, the alignment of vaulting with recover means that SunGard manages systems recovery on invocation.

The ability to conduct individual file restores online – let alone entire server recoveries should the need arise – enables Shagam’s department to deliver improved service levels and response times, as well as freeing up a considerable amount of time for other

projects. “If someone requests a restore, it is easier to do and a more exact and immediate process than before, with file restore times down from several hours to a matter of minutes. Even large server restores can now be undertaken within a day. All of our data is safe and I am fully confident of the recoverability of our critical business data,” observed Shagam.

### A greater visibility for cost management

Not only do improved levels of service provide a greater degree of visibility of the value the IT department delivers to Gerling’s users, they also deliver tangible proof of the value of the TeleVault implementation to the senior management team. Shagam explained: “Often it can be difficult to directly associate the costs of backup with tape or disk media, and as a result data costs can easily get out of control. However, the costs and savings associated with the TeleVault service are transparent, which means that the management team can perceive the benefits we get and I can use these figures for accurate planning, budgeting and infrastructure management.”

“When I consider the savings on media costs, as well as those of time, it is fair to say that provided we manage our data effectively, TeleVault pretty much pays for itself,” Shagam continued.

### Other benefits

Apart from the advantages to be gained internally by adopting TeleVault, Gerling – in common with other players in the banking, finance and insurance marketplace – is subject to audit and regulatory pressures. As Shagam commented: “There is no doubt that TeleVault, in conjunction with our other continuity provisions, helps us meet and demonstrate compliance.”

### The Future

Gerling is continuing to demonstrate its commitment to ensuring the availability of business and IT functions. In addition to revising business continuity plans, Shagam is currently looking for a solution that will make backup as easy for his mobile users as it is for their deskbound counterparts and is in discussion with SunGard to that effect.