Acronis Improves Data Protection of a Leading European Automotive Manufacturer and Saves Thousands of IT Man-Hours

Automaker overcomes the threat of downtime and evades potential loss of $60 million a day with Acronis Backup

BACKGROUND

The European auto industry is a global player, delivering 5.9 million 'Made in Europe' vehicles around the world, generating a $101 billion trade surplus, employing 13.3 million people, and annually investing $61 billion in R&D.

Today, competition within the industry drives high expectations. Since automakers rely so heavily on sophisticated IT solutions and process automation, the ability to ensure both continuous business data availability and minimal production system downtime creates a competitive advantage for a manufacturer.

When a major European automobile manufacturer wanted to improve its backup, recovery, and data protection capabilities, they turned to Acronis' proven technologies.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The Automaker* recognized that the systems that operate their manufacturing line could malfunction like any other computer. If a control system stops, the entire production line stops. This would cost The Automaker tens of thousands of dollars each hour.

With their prior solution, The Automaker could restore the systems within 30-60 minutes of a malfunction, but this was a time-consuming, manual process. The team spent thousands of man-hours annually restoring systems.

* In order to protect their security and process concerns, the company wishes to remain anonymous. We will simply refer to the customer as The Automaker.

INDUSTRY
Automotive

KEY CHALLENGES
- Downtime costs more than $10,000 each hour
- Time constraints led to reliance of outdated backups, risking downtime and up to $60 million a day in lost production

KEY REQUIREMENTS
- Minimal system downtime
- Reduced need for manual IT operations
- Reliable protection from evolving ransomware threat

KEY BENEFITS
- Reduced labor costs and decreased IT involvement
- Increased resiliency of production with consistent backups
- Reduced downtime with greater efficiencies, cost savings, and reliability

Any improvement in the recovery time objective (RTO) would lead to huge savings in avoided downtime and IT resources spent.

Compounding the challenge: time constraints in the production line's maintenance windows meant there were many times when system images couldn't be created. As a result, The Automaker had to rely on image copies that were 12 to 18 months old. Using these outdated images and potentially incompatible system configurations put the company at risk of prolonged downtime and up to $60 million per day in lost production.

Additionally, the evolving risk of ransomware became a threat to manufacturing business continuity that The Automaker couldn't ignore. To actively protect their process control computers, the company wanted a solution to guard their computers.

Based on the advice of its process control equipment vendor and a thorough review of available backup solutions, The Automaker switched to Acronis Backup.

THE ACRONIS SOLUTION

The Automaker installed an Acronis Backup agent on the Windows operating system of each process control system. Each plant has Acronis Management Server installed, enabling the automaker to centrally manage the agents in every piece of protected equipment. Acronis Backup makes it possible to create images of live systems without interrupting production operations.

For most systems, backups are stored on a centralized Network Attached Storage (NAS), simplifying file searches and speeding up recovery. For additional security, these backup files can also be stored on external USB Hard Disk Drives.

Backups are scheduled to run regularly, with IT creating additional backups on an ad hoc basis in accordance with their process control software updates. Acronis Backup automatically notifies the IT department if anything goes wrong, monitors the status, and creates reports on backup results. Backups are now performed on live systems –

without stopping the production line – which allows the IT team to create backups twice as frequently as they did before. These automated backups saved The Automaker thousands of hours of manual interventions, enabling the IT team to focus on more important tasks.

The whole recovery process is now twice as fast because backup images are easy to access and Acronis' superior technologies require less time to restore an image. The Acronis Management Server has an intuitive, straightforward user interface, which means minimal training is required before IT staff members can use it. Within minutes, the specialist recovers the system, reboots it, and the production line's operations return to normal. Acronis' disk-imaging technology ensures fast and reliable recovery.

If the process control system is damaged beyond a quick repair, IT replaces the system with a spare, empty, "bare-metal" machine. The specialist follows the same simple procedure and recovers the image to the new hardware – even to dissimilar hardware, through Acronis Universal Restore.

KEY BENEFITS

With the transition to Acronis Backup, The Automaker saved thousands of hours annually that were previously spent manually creating disk images with the old solution. Now, with images that are automatically created on schedule and on live machines, their team can invest more time on improving processes, ensuring quality, and optimizing the delivery of vehicles demanded by their customers around the world.

What's more, the IT team can run backups twice as often, shortening the recovery point objective (RPO) and providing more up-to-date backup images for each control system. If the system malfunctions, recovering the most recent image means there is no need to reapply and recheck updates and configuration changes. Acronis Backup reduces the risk of production equipment malfunctions based on outdated configurations, which could introduce quality issues in the final product.

And, of course, if hardware does malfunction, the IT specialist can quickly restore the system using Acronis Backup's patented disk-imaging technology, which ensures fast and reliable recovery, while Acronis Universal Restore eliminates failed recoveries caused by differences between the original and replacement hardware.

Plus, since Acronis Backup comes with the integrated anti-malware defense Acronis Active Protection, The Automaker now has peace of mind that neither a ransomware nor cryptojacking attack will stop the production line. The AI-powered defense will even automatically restore any files affected by an attack, and protects their systems against zero-day attacks from ransomware strains that have never been seen before.

Acronis Backup is now a critical component of The Automaker's production process control systems. With it, the production plant systems are kept safe through regular, automatic, live disk-imaging backups of all process control systems. Acronis Backup ensures the world's most secure backup with reliable recovery, reduced downtime, and reduced production-line outages caused by malfunctioning control equipment.

ABOUT ACRONIS

Acronis sets the standard for cyber protection and hybrid cloud storage through its innovative backup, anti-ransomware, disaster recovery, storage, and enterprise file sync and share solutions. Enhanced by AI-based Active Protection technology, blockchain-based authentication and a unique hybrid-cloud architecture, Acronis protects all data in any environment, including physical, virtual, cloud, mobile workloads and applications.

Founded in Singapore in 2003, today the company is trusted by more than 5 million consumers and 500,000 businesses worldwide, including 79 of the top 100 most valuable brands.

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Learn more at
www.acronis.com