VyStar Credit Union

Automating disaster recovery with OpCon

Eliminating Human Error by Automating Disaster Recovery

VyStar Credit Union is based in Jacksonville, Florida and is an institution dedicated to improving the financial lives of their members and supporting communities. Prior to deploying SMA Technologies' OpCon in its disaster recovery environment, VyStar's failover process took about two and a half hours and required more than 150 manual steps. That meant there were two and a half hours during which the credit union was unable to serve its more than half-million members, as well as plenty of opportunity for human error. According to Systems Administrator Alex Castanheira, that simply wasn't acceptable.

Founded in 1952, VyStar Credit Union has served members in the Northeast and Central Florida areas for more than 65 years.

- FIS Miser
- 1,291 Employees
- 515,000 Members
- $6.1 Billion in assets
- 51 Branches

CHALLENGE	SOLUTION	BENEFITS
The manual failover process took more than two and a half hours	OpCon now automates 95 percent of the failover process	Failover time is reduced by 40 percent
The manual failover process was prone to human error	OpCon flawlessly performs all required steps	The core database is shielded from possible corruption
Stress levels were high during failover due to the criticality of getting everything right	The current failover process requires only one manual step	Stress associated with the failover process is eliminated

After implementing OpCon, VyStar quickly realized the benefits of true automation across their datacenter. Not only was OpCon able to handle the core processing for the business, it could integrate all other supporting systems too. Just a month later, they eagerly partnered with their SMA Technologies automation specialist to completely automate their disaster recovery process.

OpCon Does the Heavy Lifting

The fail-over and disaster recovery steps taken by OpCon are straightforward. The major components include:

- Bringing down the core database and ensure that it's completely offline
- Bringing the replicated database online at the secondary site and enabling all the services needed by employees and members
- Initiating the failover process and making sure all journals are in sync

According to Castanheira, he intentionally designed the process so that during a regular failover, a live human being needs to tell OpCon to proceed with the failover from the primary site to the secondary. "This just requires someone to go in and respond to a pending message," he said. During a catastrophic event where the primary site is completely gone, OpCon has been configured to automatically fail-over on its own. VyStar's business continuity plans are now reliable and no longer exposed to the risk of human error.

> "We eliminated both the human error and the human stress levels associated with a manual failover process."
>
> .Alex Castanheira, Systems Administrator

No More Human Error

Human errors put data at risk, but VyStar has completely eliminated those risks with OpCon. Previously, "if somebody didn't verify that the core database was completely offline, the database could easily become corrupted," said Castanheira. This is now impossible with OpCon in control.

Likewise, if the database isn't completely replicated during the failover process, the database at the secondary site can become corrupted. OpCon verifies that the replication process is complete and successful to further reduce the risk of error and corruption.

Ready for Trouble

Since integrating OpCon into the failover process, VyStar has reduced its downtime to less than one hour and 25 minutes – a savings of more than one full hour. According to Castanheira, 95% of the failover process is now automated with OpCon. Likewise, human error is a thing of the past. Though VyStar has never had to resort to this process in a live disaster, Castanheira is confident that the credit union is ready. "We test the entire procedure annually," he said, "usually just before hurricane season."