rubrik

Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport Gains Competitive Edge with Rubrik through Automation and Self-Service Data Management

INDUSTRY

Media & Entertainment

RESULTS

- 90% management time savings (from one FTE to a few hours per day)

- Near-zero RTO (from hours to seconds)

- Significantly increased backup performance

THE CHALLENGE

- Labor-intensive and complex legacy data management solution

- Unreliable tape-based restore process

- Inability to automate workflows and allow other departments to self-serve

THE SOLUTION

- Single policy engine to automate backup and recovery

- Fast recovery

- API-driven automation and self-service data management

Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport, headquartered in Brackley, UK, is one of the most successful teams in the history of Formula One. The team includes five-time FIA Formula One Drivers' World Champion, Lewis Hamilton, widely regarded as one of the greatest drivers in the history of the sport. The team's 16 wins in both 2014 and 2015 broke a new record for most wins in a single season, before bettering that in 2016 with 19 victories. The following year, in 2017, the team became the first to defend both Championships across a major regulation change.

Matt Harris, Head of IT, manages a 30-person IT team that supports over 800 heavy technology users. "Our team is focused on winning both the Drivers' and Constructors' Championships and the right IT environment is essential to that pursuit. The difference between winning and losing in this sport comes down to fractions of a second. As a result, technology is weaved into every facet of our team's performance, from design to trackside," said Harris.

"Fully understanding and leveraging data and IT solutions is now so important to win races," added Harris. "The team is constantly developing our cars in the quest for faster lap times, and analysis of race data plays a vital role in achieving the incremental gains that have put us at the top of the sport. We generate over 500 GB of data every race weekend from one car alone, so there is a massive amount of valuable information that needs to be protected."

"The main currency in our organization is time," said Harris. "Just as time is critical to the performance of our race cars, it is also vital to our team's ability to deliver the technical infrastructure that holds our organization together. We are constantly looking for ways to improve our IT team's performance just as we strive to achieve faster lap times. As a result, we adopt technologies that allow us to save time or simplify our processes—and that's where Rubrik comes in."

ADMINISTRATIVE HEADACHES AND LACK OF CONFIDENCE WITH LEGACY SOLUTION

"Our tape-centric legacy data management system had become too complex and unreliable to adequately protect our critical data," said Chris Green, IT Operations Manager. "We had a full-time employee dedicated to managing backups, yet we were missing 50% of our data protection goals. There were times where weeks would go by without some systems being successfully protected. We spent a year trying to fix the issues with no success."

"We had no confidence in our previous solution and actually experienced data loss from the complexities of tape management," said Green. "We had a data tape inadvertently returned to the scratch pool, making it impossible for us to recover key data several years ago. The team was skeptical of our legacy solution's ability to adequately restore our data, and we needed to assign another IT person to assist our backup expert with the restore. This is the kind of resource expenditure that we just could not continue with."

"Backup is not the most glamourous part of IT, but when it goes wrong, it can be very tricky. Using the right solution is absolutely critical," added Harris.

UNRIVALLED SIMPLICITY WITH RUBRIK'S DATA MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

"Some of the best decisions we've made as a team are when we prioritize simplicity," said Green. "We needed a data management solution that would lessen our team's workload while fully protecting the data that is crucial to our success."

"Rubrik stood out from the competition," added Green. "Rubrik offered a truly simple and elegant solution for data management. We also loved their API-first architecture, which would allow us to further drive value for the business with workflow automation. Our final decision was influenced by Rubrik's forward-looking data management philosophy, which will enable us to move faster as our needs grow and evolve."

EMPOWERING OTHER BUSINESS UNITS WITH SELF-SERVICE DATA MANAGEMENT

"We are currently utilizing Rubrik's role-based access control (RBAC) and multi-tenancy functionality," said Green. "One of the most appealing aspects of Rubrik is its ability to be rolled out to other teams. For example, we are in the process of upgrading our CAD platform and have allowed a number of key users to interact with Rubrik directly. Without having to open tickets with the IT team, they can do on-demand backups and self-service restores. This has led to cross-departmental gains in efficiency."

"Traditionally, only the IT team would have the expertise necessary to perform data management functions for our engineering departments, but with Rubrik, the teams have direct control. Because Rubrik essentially manages itself, our team has more time to devote to strategic projects and finding ways to assist other departments," said Green.

DRIVING AUTOMATION THROUGH RUBRIK'S API-FIRST ARCHITECTURE

"At the beginning of a race, we sign off new software code in a development lab and then ship that out to the race track," said Green. "Previously, we used virtual machine snapshots to seal the environment to a recovery point which involved shipping tapes and performing lengthy recoveries. We now use Rubrik's Live Mount to get up and running quickly and to ship new code faster. We are also looking into using Rubrik's REST APIs to create a lab orchestration package that speaks directly to Rubrik to further automate pre-race preparation."

"The ability to use Rubrik's APIs with our software developers also eliminates the need for training," said Green. "They also no longer need to reach out to the IT team to do a backup. We supply them with a set of commands built with the APIs and all the complexity is hidden behind the scenes, making everyone's lives easier."

DELIVERING GREATER VALUE FROM BACKUP

Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport is using Rubrik to protect its 97% virtualized environment, including MS SQL, SharePoint, Exchange, Oracle, and NAS. Benefits include:

- **90% management time savings**: "With our legacy solution, we had one full-time employee just managing backups. Now we only spend a few hours per day checking Rubrik. We also no longer need to move up to 50 tapes per day. That's a huge bonus!"

- **Near-zero RTOs**: "Previously, it could take two hours to recover. With Live Mount, it's a matter of seconds. We had a successful recovery during our mandatory summer shutdown period, which is a key test of our data management capabilities."

- **Significantly increased backup performance**: "We no longer have backup windows and are thrilled to have removed this administrative overhead."

- **Simplified restore process**: "We experienced a database corruption issue while our DBA was on vacation. Previously, he would have to pull out his laptop and spent a portion of his holiday working remotely. With Rubrik, our DBA lounged by the pool and talked our infrastructure support team through a four-click Live Mount restore in minutes."

- **Automated policy engine**: "We were always worried that something might slip through the cracks with our previous manual configuration and job scheduling. Rubrik's SLA policy engine makes it easy to ensure all of our data is protected."

- **Ease of use**: "Rubrik's simplicity and intuitive interface make it a pleasure to work with. We installed it and started using it on the same day. It was almost too easy. I kept thinking, 'what's the catch?'" Additionally, it only took an hour to train the whole team."

- **Fast restores with Google-like search**: "With Rubrik's real-time search, we never have any issues finding exactly what we need."

- **High performance with Pure Storage and Rubrik**: "The combination of Pure Storage's (another Official Team Partner) all-flash arrays with Rubrik has been brilliant."

- **Data archival to private cloud**: "Rubrik's ability to integrate with the cloud has led us to move some data off-premises to a private cloud provider. Additionally, since Rubrik is vendor-agnostic, we can choose from any public or private cloud vendor that fits our needs today and tomorrow."

"Every year, the data that we produce in Formula One increases significantly. With Rubrik, we're confident we can not only protect that data, but scale to meet that growth. Rubrik is so much more than a business continuity solution—it's the future of data management."

- Matt Harris, Head of IT