

Fast-Growing Food Distributor Modernizes Backup With Compass™



CUSTOMER

Cheney Brothers

INDUSTRY

Food distribution

SOLUTION

Cobalt Iron
Compass Solution

BENEFIT

Compass manages
the SAP HANA
environment, backing
up around 12 TB a day

SMART.
SECURE.
AUTOMATED.

cobalt IRON®

SUMMARY

Fast-growing food distributor Cheney Brothers is using Cobalt Iron's Compass solution to consolidate, simplify, and accelerate backup of systems across the company's SAP HANA environment.

SITUATION

Cheney Brothers is the fastest growing food distributor in the United States. Founded in 1925, the family-owned business today boasts annual sales of over \$2 billion and 700 tractor trailers, 200 loading docks, 64,495 stocked items, and more than 3,000 employees.

Providing service by sea, air, and land, Cheney Brothers maintains a variety of facilities — primarily in Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas — that makes it challenging to ensure data is protected against intrusion yet is still accessible to authorized users across all sites. To manage business operations, ranging from supply chain and distribution to finance, the company maintains a complicated landscape of external systems that are in communication with its SAP environment, with business applications running nonstop. The rapid growth of the company has added further challenges in managing data.

To address these challenges, Cheney Brothers undertook a project that would eliminate reliance on tape, accelerate backups, simplify its SAP HANA backup environment, and consolidate both the company's backup servers and its data center locations.

"Our primary goal in shifting to Compass was simply to be able to have good, reliable, fast backups, and the Cobalt Iron solution has given us that; it's super-fast. I absolutely love the speed at which we can perform backups now. It used to take us eight hours to back up our production database, which is about two terabytes, and now I can do it in under an hour."

Raul Revilla, SAP Basis Administrator, Cheney Brothers

Cheney Brothers' Challenges: Outdated. Limited. Unreliable.

Cheney Brothers relied on a tape-based data protection platform for years but was outgrowing the system, both in terms of performance and functionality. The amount of data requiring backup had been increasing steadily along with the company's growth, causing an increase in the amount of time required to complete backups. At the same time, administrators began seeing regular failures of either tapes or the tape library that made an update or replacement of the existing platform a necessity.

"We wanted to get off of tape, to retire some of our aging tape libraries, and to realize a faster and more reliable backup process," says Raul Revilla, SAP Basis Administrator at Cheney Brothers. "We had to plan for lengthy backups before we could even begin to do our maintenance. If we had a tape hiccup, or a tape library hiccup, we had to restart everything, and that was a massive problem. We would either have to push forward without a really good backup, or postpone system maintenance."

Slow and failed backups were a critical issue for Cheney Brothers, as was the company's inability to have its backups encrypted. These limitations made it impossible to address requirements from auditors. Costing the company both time and money, these challenges compromised business efficiency and continuity.

While Cheney Brothers could have shifted to a newer version of its installed solution, the upgrade itself would have been a difficult process — and it would have kept backup tied to outdated tape-based technology. Rather than invest in a data protection solution that wasn't meeting its needs, the company opted for a more modern solution that would address key pain points, offer added functionality required by the business, and scale along with ongoing business growth.

Fast. Reliable. Robust.

Cheney Brothers deployed Cobalt Iron's Compass to manage backup for the company's large and complex SAP HANA environment. Using a phased approach and working closely with Cobalt Iron, Cheney Brothers implemented the system in multiple stages, first in one facility and then at the company's disaster recovery facility, carefully moving over one system at a time. Today the data protection solution backs up approximately 12 TB a day.

"Our primary goal in shifting to Compass was simply to be able to have good, reliable, fast backups, and the Cobalt Iron solution has given us that; it's super-fast," says Revilla. "I absolutely love the speed at which we can perform backups now. It used to take us eight hours to back up our production database, which is about 2 terabytes, and now I can do it in under an hour. We do regular system maintenance here, and we always do a backup first. Being able to plan for just an hour of backup prior to scheduled maintenance is a dramatic improvement that makes a big difference for us."

The solution, one of the first in the market to leverage the SAP HANA APIs, gives Cheney Brothers' Revilla a single console with which to manage and report on an enterprise basis.



COBALT IRON CASE STUDY: CHENEY BROTHERS

“The level of service from the Cobalt Iron team has been just outstanding. I have no previous experience with this kind of solution, and they have held my hand throughout this entire process. I deal with the same people all the time, and their response times are fantastic. I can give them remote access to our system and watch them take care of anything, from A to Z. That I trust them with my systems says a lot about my confidence in Cobalt Iron.”

Raul Revilla
SAP Basis
Administrator
Cheney Brothers

Compass delivers automation of updates and upgrades for backup servers. As a result, the company’s data protection environment is always running with the most current security, features, and optimization. Centralized management, global policy administration, and automated maintenance updates reduce management time while increasing reliability and performance.

The solution, one of the first in the market to leverage the SAP HANA APIs, gives Cheney Brothers’ Revilla a single console with which to manage and report on an enterprise basis. The system’s Commander dashboard offers a simple and intuitive user experience.

“I’m used to a command-line interface for the previous software, but once I learned where to find information on the Compass GUI, it was easy,” adds Revilla. “The fact that it also can be managed remotely is a great plus, and I like that the team at Cobalt Iron can do some monitoring and handle software upgrades on their end. The less I have to do with fixing problems, with failed backups or any other kind of issue, the more I can devote my time to other systems.”

Revilla remains in the habit of logging into each one of his databases every morning, and making sure that he sees the little green mark that says it was successfully backed up. When there was an issue with one of his systems, it was Cobalt Iron that made him aware of the problem.

Modernized Data Protection

With its deployment of Cobalt Iron’s Compass to back up the company’s SAP

HANA environment, Cheney Brothers has implemented state-of-the-art technology that accelerates backup processes, eliminates costs and complexity associated with aging tape-based systems, enables automated updates, facilitates re-

remote monitoring and management, and consolidates and simplifies data protection across all systems and sites. Because the system scales easily from terabytes to exabytes, Cheney Brothers has plenty of room for future growth.



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