Data availability and security are vital for the automotive industry. This is especially true for a manufacturer of exclusive luxury motorhomes, that needs ongoing access to all its data, spanning over 35 years of production. Since its establishment in 1981, Concorde has been recognized as an industry leader in the production of innovative motorhomes. The company has a reputation of being a premium manufacturer that operates with precision and to the highest quality standards. Concorde runs its IT Systems with that same philosophy, particularly as both their current and historical data are critical to the vehicle manufacturer’s business operations. The company relies on StorageCraft’s solutions for their data management, protection, and disaster recovery needs.

Stefan Rodammer, Concorde’s Head of IT, is responsible for the company’s internal IT operation which consists of ten servers, 160 PCs, a broad range of mobile devices, as well as business applications, warehouse logistics, design and development, along with customer support.

“As a medium-sized company with high quality standards, IT plays a key role for us. We are experiencing a tremendous data growth of almost 50 percent per year, and our historical data needs to be constantly available, as a result data storage and data protection are extremely critical to us. In addition, we do not have time for complex administration work. Our systems must be reliable and guarantee long-term scalability, as well as offer total data protection in the event of a disaster, such as a ransomware attack.” Rodammer explains.
Concorde’s previous virtualized servers and existing RAIDs were deployed in 2016, and predictably quickly reached full capacity due to the rapid data growth. The company faces a unique challenge due to the business requirements of the luxury motorhome: the manufacturer needs to keep account of the historical data for every vehicle they have supplied since 1985 - that is over 10,000 motorhomes! As a luxury brand, Concorde must ensure the data relating to any given vehicle, is available due to the extremely long service life cycle and high levels of customization of each motorhome.

Customers can invest millions of Euros in a Concorde vehicle and expect a first-class service. Keeping record on the intricate details for each motorhome is critical: which exclusive shower head was fitted, which parts were used in the steam bath, which components were chosen for the entry rail for the integrated tandem vehicle, etc. This information always needs to be readily accessible, as well as spare parts being in stock and available, should a client require one of them at any time. Long-term documentation is therefore a crucial part of Concorde's business strategy.

For Concorde, this deployment now guarantees an optimum data security, including protection against ransomware attacks.

Stefan Rodammer
Head of IT

Scale-out as a future solution

Based on the company’s technical and strategic business requirements, their IT manager was looking for a scale-out storage solution, which could offer high scalability in terms of both storage volume and performance. As Concorde already had positive experiences with the backup and recovery solution from StorageCraft (ShadowProtect), they looked at the vendor’s storage solution. Stefan Rodammer understood very quickly that StorageCraft OneXafe – a converged data platform, combining enterprise-class data protection with scale-out storage in one easy-to-use, configurable solution – was the right choice to protect the organization's unstructured data.

A total of four OneXafe 4412’s were deployed in two redundant data centers and at a third separate location, all connected to the 10 Gbit fiber-optic network. The configuration, including the data replication for both the production and backup data, was done in a short period of time; thanks to the help of the StorageCraft German speaking support team. From December 2019, Concorde started to enjoy the benefits from the combined deployment of OneXafe and ShadowProtect, eliminating the need of managing different solutions and strengthening its overall data resilience posture.
Migrating data and bring your own drive

The relatively small amount of variable data (production data) was migrated over a weekend. Stefan Rodammer also decided to consolidate older NAS drives from CNC machines and various department archives to the OneXafe appliances, to ensure reliability. The data volume from these was approximately ten terabytes. The migration of the 60 terabytes of backups data was done in a step by step approach. Rodammer also took advantage of a key OneXafe feature: the option to bring your own drive. StorageCraft does not force customers to purchase expensive, proprietary hard drives from them. Users have the possibility to buy the drives from StorageCraft or source them elsewhere, providing they are on the product’s compatibility list. If so, existing drives from other systems can be re-used. The IT manager availed of this opportunity and made significant savings as a result.

The existing backup jobs started to be redirected to one of the three nodes, and a full backup was initiated. The older backups, consolidated by Image Manager, were then transferred to the storage destination target. Stefan Rodammer recycled the hard drives from the older NAS and used them to increase the OneXafe storage capacity pool. That enabled Concorde to make substantial savings and allowed them to extend the life cycle of these powerful and expensive hard drives. After a few weeks, all of the historical backups had been migrated to the new storage appliances. This marked the end of the project and the old NAS systems were completely decommissioned. As a result, all the historical backups are preserved, and together with the new backups, are now protected from any type of disaster, such as a ransomware attack, thanks to the OneXafe immutable snapshot feature.

“For me, it was very important that the entire migration process ran as smoothly as possible. The high degree of independence from hard drive manufacturers and the simple migration management of the OneXafe solution helped enormously. When we went live on a Monday, after the data and drives had been migrated, not a single user noticed the difference”, Rodammer summarizes.

As Europe’s largest luxury motorhome provider with over 35 years of experience and very high quality standards, we have been placing our trust in StorageCraft solutions for many years. In 2019, the time was right to implement the OneXafe scale-out object-based NAS solution in conjunction with our existing StorageCraft ShadowProtect SPX backup and recovery deployment to strengthen our data resilience posture.

Stefan Rodammer
Head of IT
Operational reliability and protection from ransomware

Total business continuity, being always on 24/7 is crucial for Concorde. The company has been using StorageCraft solutions for backup and recovery for several years. ShadowProtect performs backups every hour; these are consolidated with ImageManager and monitored with ShadowControl.

The storage and backup & recovery deployment at Concorde is designed to ensure maximum security. The backup data is replicated across the different OneXafe appliances that are deployed in different buildings.

StorageCraft ShadowProtect ensures Concorde’s data in fully protected; it does not however guarantee protection against a ransomware attack. The potential loss of production data, including backups, would be extremely painful for Concorde should they experience a cyberattack, with dramatic consequences to its production capabilities and customer satisfaction.

This is where OneXafe’s immutable snapshots come to the rescue. The storage system takes immutable snapshots every 90 seconds! The continuous snapshots occur every 90 seconds for the first hour, then hourly, daily, weekly, and monthly. The snapshots are immutable and fully protect the unstructured data stored on OneXafe, guarding it against ransomware or user error. They are completely unaffected and immune from deletions and modifications. Users can easily recover any-sized share (from TBs to PBs) in seconds by promoting an existing immutable snapshot with read/write capabilities (e.g., after a ransomware attack).

The results

“As Europe’s largest luxury motorhome manufacture, with over 35 years of experience, we have been trusting StorageCraft backup and recovery solutions for many years. 2019 was the right time to implement their OneXafe solution, to store and protect our 364 terabytes of critical data. This new infrastructure guarantees optimum levels of security, scalability and performance” Head of IT Stefan Rodammer sums up. “For me, this is a huge improvement! I can now enjoy a good night sleep.”