

The Kraft Group transforms their data protection environment



Customer profile



Multi-industry holding company | United States



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Michael Israel

CIO, The Kraft Group

Business needs

With two pro sports teams, a stadium, and a range of entertainment, construction and other businesses, The Kraft Group needs simplicity, reliability and innovation in their data protection. To reach their data protection goals they standardized on Dell Technologies solutions across their entire enterprise.

Business results

- Reduced backup windows by as much as 70%
- Enables a single backup admin to support 7 companies
- Meets aggressive SLAs

Solutions at a glance

- [Dell Data Protection Suite- Avamar](#)
- [Dell PowerProtect DD series appliances](#)
- [Dell Data Protection for VMware](#)

At Gillette Stadium, home of the New England Patriots and New England Revolution pro sports teams and an operating unit of The Kraft Group, advanced technology is changing the way they do business. And Dell Technologies is a star player in their transformation.

“One of our primary goals at Gillette Stadium is increasing guest satisfaction all the time,” says Michael Israel, CIO of The Kraft Group. “using technology to get guests through the gates faster and to their seats faster, purchasing enhancements from a point-of-sale perspective, all that enablement is done via technology.

“Our guests expect more at this point. They expect to be able to engage and to purchase from their cell phones. Our guests now have the ability to purchase right from their seats. They can order from their seats, engage with special views, fancam views, and interact at the game in different ways that they never have been able to before. If we hadn’t invested in this technology, we wouldn’t be able to support those needs.”

Dell Covers the Field

The Kraft Group is a holding company whose expansive range of operating units includes Gillette Stadium, Kraft Sports and Entertainment, the New England Patriots and the New England Revolution sports teams, the Patriot Place shopping center, Kraft Analytics Group, Rand-Whitney Container Board, Rand-Whitney Group and International Forest Products.

Throughout the company, says Israel, “Our investment in technology, and in particular solutions from Dell Technologies, allows us to provide real-time data, real-time information to our management team, which allows them to be ultra-competitive, ultra-focused on what our guests and/or end user customers are requiring, allows us to be more nimble and sets us up for future success.”

With its diverse and in many cases highly visible holdings, The Kraft Group is constantly monitoring its data security environment. “We’re looking at things like ransomware attacks, looking at Zero Day attacks that are coming at us on a daily basis,” explains Israel. “We are constantly focused on how to make the environment as secure as possible. We ask ourselves, ‘How can we change the way we’re engaging from day to day?’ because of all of these external factors.”

One of The Kraft Group’s key goals for data protection has been to standardize the environment; as Israel notes, “putting a common set of products out there so that our lives will be simpler in the end.”



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Avamar Cuts Backup Windows

“We use Avamar across all of our operating companies to back up all of our internal data, all our on-prem VMware based apps. Our applications include everything from our manufacturing systems within our paper recycling and box manufacturing mills to internal systems that support the Patriots or the New England Revolution, as well as internal systems that support stadium operations.”

Prior to the implementation of Avamar, The Kraft Group had disparate systems across their operating companies. “Our goal was to consolidate those systems to one common platform that could allow us to also to build a common disaster recovery system and process for remediation,” says Israel. “We did an analysis of a variety of platforms that were out there for protecting our data, but our partnership with Dell Technologies led us to the Avamar product and it has been just a great asset to the organization.



“All of our internal systems across all of the operating companies sit on a Dell platform of backup storage systems,” he says. “That includes everything from manufacturing data to stadium-based data, anything happening within our four walls. Every one of our business units and our locations currently runs a standard set of backup software and storage systems. We have completely standardized our backup environment on Dell across the enterprise.”

Israel states that the most important component of The Kraft Group’s data protection is enabling their disaster recovery plan. “All of this flows to one common disaster recovery location that would allow us to restart any of our businesses in case of emergency, within our defined SLAs,” he says.

“Our SLAs are based on the specific business unit. An SLA for recovery at the stadium is very different than an SLA in one of our manufacturing companies. If we don’t have a game at stadium for the next week, we could rebuild the environment in two or three days. In a manufacturing environment that works 24x7, we have to be able to respond accordingly.”

The Kraft Group currently has over 500 virtual servers in their environment, all being run on VMware, and over 600 terabytes of data being managed in their environment.



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“With the implementation of Avamar, we have seen a reduced time for backups, an overall process enhancement, in that we have a standard structure across all of our companies – but more important, a common platform which we can restore from, and which we can manage to.

“Between the use of Avamar and our variety of Dell storage systems, we have cut our backup windows by as much as 70%. Overall, backup is no longer something that makes us nervous. It is operating very efficiently and smoothly across the enterprise, and we’ve been able to focus on more pressing issues. The three benefits of Avamar are ease of use, ease of management and the overall integration into the rest of our Dell platforms.”

PowerProtect DD Simplifies Administration

The Kraft Group chose PowerProtect DD series appliances as a complementary product to their Avamar backup solution. “With PowerProtect DD, we are able to support seven different operating companies through a single system administrator,” Israel says. “What we liked most about PowerProtect DD is that it was a very simple startup process and it requires very little day-to-day management of the backup process.”

As a result of implementing Dell data protection, The Kraft Group’s internal IT team has been able to be more proactive in the management of other systems. “This includes our network management, our storage systems, and our file structure scenario,” Israel says, “basically, in our day-to-day operations.

“The partnership that The Kraft Group has with Dell Technologies for data protection simply means ease of management for this entire environment. Overall, the biggest value-add we have from working with Dell is the array of solutions and the support we get, from the executive level down.”

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