Direct Relief ditches tape
for Carbonite Hybrid Backup

"Now that we have Carbonite, we can restore files within minutes. It's really that quick."

Aaron Skinner, Senior Systems Administrator, Direct Relief

Direct Relief is the largest charitable provider of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies in the United States. Founded more than 40 years ago, the charity provides humanitarian aid in all 50 states and 70 countries. Whether it's sending protective equipment to healthcare workers caring for Ebola patients in West Africa, or delivering medical aid to clinics dealing with the aftermath of the Louisiana floods, Direct Relief's mission is to improve the health and lives of people affected by poverty or emergencies.

That means the charity's data center needs to run 24x7 without interruptions—and all the data Direct Relief creates must be fully protected and easily recovered in the event that digital files are lost. That's why the Goleta, California-based nonprofit moved from tape to Carbonite Hybrid Backup *Powered by EVault.*

The 74-employee charity has a six-person IT staff, including Aaron Skinner, Direct Relief's senior systems administrator, who is responsible for managing backups. The charity's IT infrastructure consists primarily of about 40 Windows-based servers and an SAP ERP implementation located at a hosted data center in Aurora, Colorado.

The evolution from tape

A few years back, Direct Relief was depending on a tape-based system to back up its servers as well as its SAP implementation. Processes related to physically managing the tapes were time-consuming and cumbersome, and backup work was taking up way too much of Skinner's time.

Today, the IT team at Direct Relief is using Carbonite Hybrid Backup to back up about 2 TB worth of data locally. All data is also archived to the cloud for offsite data protection.

DirectRelief®

Company name

Direct Relief

Headquarters

Goleta, California

Industry

Direct Relief is a charitable provider of pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and humanitarian aid.

Business environment

- 74 employees
- 40 Microsoft Windows-based servers located onsite
- Hosted SAP implementation

Implementation team

Direct Relief IT staff and the Carbonite customer support team

Tape versus hybrid backup

One of the biggest advantages of moving from a backup system that relies on tape to a combination of cloud and local disk-based backup is the amount of time you save—especially when it comes to recovering lost data, Skinner said.

Skinner cited the example of using tape to restore Microsoft Exchange data. In the past, when Skinner was asked to restore Exchange data, he'd have to wait at least one day for the tapes to be delivered from an offsite location. Then he would have to manually catalog the tapes, complete the restore process and hope that nothing went wrong.

"Oftentimes, our users would avoid asking the IT department for a restore because it would take us days to get it if we could get it at all. Instead, they would just recreate the work," he explained. "Now that we have Carbonite Hybrid Backup, we can restore files within minutes. It's really that quick."

Excellent customer support

The customer support team was especially helpful during the implementation process. It sent Skinner fully configured Dell servers that were "ready to go," then walked him through the process of getting them running and making sure they were backing up both locally and to the cloud.

In the days following the implementation, it was a challenge to make sure there was enough bandwidth to allow for data replication to the cloud without affecting the speeds of users who connect into the network. But with some help from the customer support team—and by using the backup solution's bandwidth throttling capabilities—Skinner was able to set up a backup schedule that works for everyone.
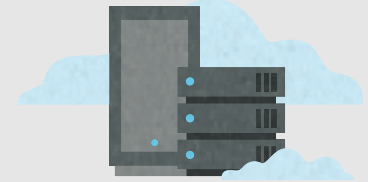
"I always get very good help and people that really understand the product," he says. "The support team is great to work with."

Direct Relief was the beneficiary of a hardware and software donation from Carbonite.

[Learn more](#) about Carbonite cloud and hybrid backup solutions today.

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Results

- Reduced recovery time from days to minutes
- Eliminated need for error-prone tape-based backups
- Freed up time to focus on strategic initiatives