

## Occidental Technical Group, LLC

Delivering Cost-effective Business Resilience with Occidental, Dell, and Symantec Solutions



**IT solutions provider Occidental Technical Group, LLC needed to provide its clients with a disaster recovery method that would be reliable, cost-efficient and faster than recovery from tape. It turned to Dell and Symantec™ for solutions. Results include a 90 percent reduction in server recovery time, full site recovery in hours instead of days, a disaster recovery service projected to be five to ten times less expensive than alternative approaches, and increased productivity from a better than 62 percent reduction in server migration time.**

### ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Based in Saint Helena, California, Occidental Technical Group, LLC ([www.occtech.com](http://www.occtech.com)) is a full-service company with 12 certified consultants who provide computer systems research, integration, and maintenance to small and medium-size businesses in California's Napa Valley area.

### INDUSTRY

Technology

### SOLUTION

Data Protection

### In the Beginning

Ideas—not technology—are what really makes the difference. Technology is a tool shaped and driven by ideas.

In Northern California's Napa Valley, Occidental Technical Group has an idea and an offering that makes its clients' businesses more resilient in a brilliantly cost-efficient way.

### Keeping Businesses Up and Running

Occidental has a dozen employees who serve about 175 businesses in the area. These clients range in size from three to 250 employees and include wineries, accounting, law, real estate, and healthcare firms, and other small to medium-size businesses.

Occidental provides technology consulting and support for its clients, but one thing it almost never does is re-sell hardware. "We work hard to stay impartial, and offer the best possible solutions to our clients," says Michael Rose, an IT consultant with the firm. "We tend to recommend Dell solutions 95 percent of the time because they're the best solutions—not because we're making money off providing them."

Dell is a Symantec Technology Partner. A key reason why Occidental recommends Dell so often is that it's a one-stop-shop, Rose explains. "As an original equipment manufacturer (OEM), Dell directly provides solutions from other vendors such as Symantec and VMware—and supports them also."

Adds Brian Tirado, a senior IT consultant with Occidental: "Dell sells so many solutions that we can contact one person and get a quote for an entire network infrastructure in one place. That simplifies our IT and saves time for us and our customers."

Support is easier as well. "If we have a question about Symantec or VMware, for instance, there's a Dell-badged expert for each of those vendors, and our Dell contact will get them on the phone," Tirado explains. "What's more, we're so familiar with Dell

**“With Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery, recovering a server is a slam dunk. Before, recovery took us as many as eight hours. Now we can recover a server very quickly in as little as 30 minutes.”**

#### Brian Tirado

Senior IT Consultant  
Occidental Technical Group,  
LLC

Using Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery, Occidental can offer its disaster recovery service at a price estimated to be five to ten times less than the cost of alternative approaches.

**“Dell sells so many solutions that we can contact one person and get a quote for an entire network infrastructure in one place. That simplifies our IT and saves time for us and our customers.”**

**Brian Tirado**

Senior IT Consultant  
Occidental Technical Group, LLC

that we can support their solutions more efficiently. Since we bill by the hour, the faster we deliver results, the better off our clients are.”

### An Idea Makes the Difference

To give the businesses it serves better protection, Occidental targeted a new kind of service: “We’ve always wanted to be able to offer clients a quicker way than tape based backup to be up and running after a disaster,” Tirado says. “We examined alternatives in the past, and the technologies didn’t really line up. They were too costly and expensive.”

Then Dell made Occidental aware of Symantec Backup Exec™ System Recovery, a disk-based system recovery solution. “When we evaluated it, we had found what we were looking for, and a number of pieces fell into place leading to our disaster recovery service offering,” Tirado notes.

### To Recover Fast, Image is Everything

The offering starts with a disaster recovery assessment of the client’s infrastructure by Occidental consultants, Rose says. The consultants identify single points of failure in the network and propose ways to make the points redundant, recommending standby hardware that should be on hand. When it comes to servers, the recommendation is simple.

“We install Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery on each of their physical servers,” Rose says. “And we typically spec two portable network-attached storage (NAS) drives that connect on to their network. Backup Exec System Recovery copies images of each server to one of those drives on a nightly basis, and that drive is swapped off site weekly with the other drive, so there’s always a copy of server images sitting off site.”

## SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

### Key Challenges

- Keep businesses up and running cost efficiently
- Simplify procurement and support of an effective IT infrastructure for clients
- Migrate servers faster and more easily to similar or dissimilar hardware
- Migrate servers quickly from physical to virtual, and virtual to physical environments

### Solution

Disk-based server imaging and recovery

### Symantec Products

Symantec Backup Exec™ System Recovery Server Edition

### Symantec Technology Partner

- Dell Inc.

### Technology Environment

- Applications: Autotask IT Services Management, Microsoft SharePoint, Microsoft Exchange 2007, BlackBerry Enterprise Server, Level Platforms.
- Databases: Microsoft SQL Server 2005
- Server platform: 3 Dell PowerEdge 2900 servers running VMware ESX 3 and 3.5, 1 Dell PowerEdge 2800 running Microsoft Windows Server 2003
- Storage: Local storage in Dell servers
- Tape Library: DLT-based tape backup using Symantec Backup Exec™. Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery to protect the base image of the non-ESX server.

### Business Results

- IT simplified through Dell as single source for solutions and support from its partners
- 94% faster server recovery (30 minutes instead of 8 hours)
- Full site recovery in hours instead of days
- Ability to offer effective disaster recovery service for 5-10 times less than alternative solutions
- 70% to 80% close rate on new clients for new disaster recovery service
- Over 62% reduction in server migration time (6 hours compared to a minimum of 16 hours)
- Fourfold faster server provisioning for testing

### Fourfold Faster Server Recovery

Adds Tirado: “With Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery, recovering a server is easy. It’s a slam dunk. Before, recovery from tape took us as many as eight or 16 hours or longer. Sometimes we worked through the night. Now we can recover a server very quickly in as little as 30 minutes.” That’s a 94 percent reduction in time.

Since starting the service in 2007, Occidental has recovered servers in disaster recovery scenarios on behalf of its clients seven times, along with many dry runs of vastly different infrastructures, all with 100 percent success.

As part of its disaster recovery service, Occidental also keeps several Dell PE2900 and SC1430 servers ready to take to any of its clients. “If the client’s server dies, our loaner server is used as a target for the server image,” Rose says. “This is made possible because Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery can recover a server to dissimilar hardware. We get the client applications back up and running, and the business can use our loaner server until the original gets repaired or replaced.”

### Site Recovery in Hours Instead of Days

To date, no client has needed an entire site recovered, but Occidental has run a successful proof of concept test of this service with one of its clients and is ready to perform it when needed. The small business in the test had four servers. “Recovering the site would probably have taken three days if we were restoring from tape,” Rose estimates. “With Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery, we had them up and running again in just six hours. Their CFO came to our office and connected by terminal server to their financial applications—he had access to everything he needed.”

### A Brilliant Resilience— at Much Less Cost

Occidental can offer its disaster recovery service at a price point friendly to small and medium-size businesses: \$150 a month for the first server and \$25 for each additional server per month. The cost of Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery software and the up-front disaster recovery planning engagement are extra.

“Without Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery, I don’t know if we really would have felt comfortable offering a service like this,” Rose says. “The alternate technologies that we evaluated are meant for enterprise-level organizations, and a service based on them would easily be five to ten times the price.”

### Migrate a Server During Lunch— Instead of all Day

Besides enabling fast server restoration and disaster recovery, Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery helps Occidental migrate servers threefold to fourfold faster for its clients.

“We can swap out server hardware during a client’s lunch hour,” Tirado notes. “With Backup Exec System Recovery we’re able to take a server image and restore it outside of the environment—even to dissimilar hardware such as a new Dell server. And then during lunch hour we just copy over data and the Microsoft Exchange databases, for example. The new server is up and running when employees come back from lunch, and they don’t know it’s been switched.”

Compare that, Rose observes, with the eight hours of onsite work and eight to 20 hours of preparation a server migration would take without Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery. The Symantec solution enables server migration to be done three to four times faster. “We’ve used Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery to migrate clients to new hardware 10 times with 100 percent success,” Tirado says.

### Virtual Flexibility

Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery is also important at Occidental because it enables physical-to-virtual and virtual-to-physical server migrations. Occidental has virtualized 90 percent of its own servers on VMware ESX server software and uses Backup Exec System Recovery to move servers quickly back and forth between physical and virtual environments. “We need to do a lot of testing and have a need for many kinds of applications,” Rose says. “With Backup Exec System Recovery and VMware ESX software, we can get a test server up and running in an hour—compared to four hours before—and then move it back to a client’s physical server easily. We have much more flexibility.”

Occidental expects that more than half of its clients will choose virtualization when it’s time to refresh their server technology. Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery will play a role again in migrating their servers.

### Customers Get It

All this is resulting in new business at Occidental. “Probably 70 to 80 percent of the customers who hear about our disaster recovery service using Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery choose it,” Tirado says. “And for all clients, we can get more work done in less time with faster server migration. The bottom line is providing clients with more uptime—and we can do that more easily with Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery.”