



Case Study **ALGOMA FINANCIAL GROUP**

QUICK VIEW

Name:

Algoma Financial Group
algomafinancialgroup.com
Patrick Graveline: IT Specialist

Location:

Sault Ste Marie, Ontario, Canada

Product:

Attix5

Configuration:

Purchased Attix5 software, utilizing existing hardware for storage in 2 locations

Environment:

Over 2 TB's of data from a distributed environment of physical and virtual Windows platforms.
90 desktops/laptops.
65 users.

Goals and Objectives:

Replace manual backup process with an automated solution.

Store data off site while investing only in software and not additional hardware.

Improve Disaster Recovery Capabilities

Challenges:

Communicating long term savings to Executive team

Algoma Financial Group has been guiding people in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario and surrounding areas since 1941 and is comprised of: Algoma Insurance Brokers Limited, Algoma Financial Services Limited, The Insurance Depot Inc. and Bruce Mines Insurance Brokers Ltd. Over the last decade, Algoma Financial has expanded their product line with the establishment of Algoma Financial Services Limited which enabled them to guide their clients to Individual Life and Small Business Group Insurance along with a wide variety of wealth management products.

Algoma Financial Group is one of the largest independent insurance brokerages in Northern Ontario.

Challenges:

To keep critical data safe in the growing Algoma Financial Group offices, IT Specialist Patrick Graveline reviewed the company Disaster Recovery process in 2013. After his review he highlighted areas that could be improved. At the top of his list was moving from manual backups to an automated process and transitioning to a process that would ensure servers would be backed up and running quickly in the event of a disaster. At the time, due to limited hardware space, Algoma Financial Group was not backing up their entire infrastructure, only critical network shares/exchange information store.

With backups taking longer and longer (often through the weekend), Graveline began researching and comparing solutions that would meet his needs and deliver an efficient and cost effective way to back data up off site without a major investment in hardware upgrades or replacements.

Steps:

Engaging many vendors, including Stage2Data, Graveline compared pricing, services and offerings. At the time, he had not heard of the Attix5 technology but was introduced to it through Stage2Data. When he became more familiar with Attix5 he requested a product demo and was encouraged by the flexible options the Stage2Data team provided him with. Graveline was particularly impressed by Attix5 and its ability to give him the option of using his existing hardware to create his own Private Cloud.

Solutions:

Attix5 capacity software license to eliminate hardware purchase/upgrade and create secure Private Cloud for daily offsite backup and disaster recovery.

“I don't typically get excited by software. It's very seldom that I'll come across a piece of software I go out of my way to tell people about but Attix5 is the exception.”

- Patrick Graveline,
Algoma Financial Group

The cost of Attix5 in comparison to other vendors was equal in the first year. But it was when Graveline extrapolated the costs over 5 years that the difference was so clearly highlighted. Having done his own estimates including the cost of implementing their own backup solution it was clear Attix5 was a compelling and cost effective long term solution.

Approaching the executive team with his cost projections and savings made the approval of Attix5 and Stage2Data much easier. Graveline explains it like this; “The initial first year investment with Attix5 was the same as with the other products. But those other products don't deliver the savings over subsequent years because you're paying support per TB usage. In the first year we will pay our usual amount but in subsequent years our costs are literally cut by over 60%, saving us tens of thousands of dollars. We end up with a Private Cloud solution that is substantially less expensive but still gives us the features we want. We can back up our entire infrastructure, deduplicate, compress and encrypt and also mirror over to our other site for off-site disaster recovery. In other words? Exactly what I wanted.”

Results:

The transition from manual backups to Attix5 took a few weeks as Graveline worked in conjunction with the Oakville, Ontario based Stage2Data Professional Services team. When the transition was fully complete the results were excellent. Graveline reports “The amount of time that I spent on tape, just fixing backups and making sure they were working has been eliminated. With Attix5 my backups are solid. Now I get daily email reports telling me that all backups are complete. It's nice knowing that I don't have to worry about it. Now I can concentrate on other projects.”

The confidence Algoma Financial has with Attix5 is very high. Graveline had to restore data four times since it went live and he states that it “has been accurate each time with no issues restoring data or permissions and is very fast which my users appreciate.”

Graveline suggests deduplication was previously an expensive option from their old tape vendor but with Attix5 it's built-in and is much easier to work with.

Algoma Financial Group is a member of the Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario (IBAO) and enjoys exclusive pricing and services available only to members. According to Algoma Financial Group IT Specialist, Patrick Graveline the Stage2Data solution was ideal in terms of both value and service.

Service:

Algoma Financial had in-depth dealings with Stage2Data's Oakville based 24/7 Professional Services team for installation training and found them to be very accessible and knowledgeable. If the primary contact needed assistance the call was escalated to a more experienced team member quickly. There was no waiting for calls. The process was in place from the first day and the process is timely with software configuration as needed.

