



## OPEN MINDS PROVIDE SQL SERVER & SAGE RECOVERY SOLUTION FOR KOCHER & BECK

Kocher & Beck prepared for future growth by using Open Minds for systems resilience using SteelEye LifeKeeper.

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Kocher and Beck provide cutting tools for the label market. With a prestigious customer base including well known house hold names, they work to tight deadlines and high expectations. David Morris helped to open their UK office in 1991, sales turnover now exceeds £3m and the demand has been so great that they have had to expand into the current purpose built facility which incorporates 20,000 sq ft of production space and 5000 sq ft of office space. Taylor Made Technology Ltd. (recently acquired by Concentrix Ltd.), have been working with Kocher and Beck since 1994 to provide them with Sage Accounts, hardware, IT support and infrastructure.



**David Morris**  
Managing Director  
Kocher & Beck

**Martin Stannage**  
Taylor Made Technology

As their business requirements have grown, K&B's IT requirements have grown accordingly; they currently have 40 users on their sales and accounts systems, and 25 users on their production machines.

**Why did you look for a recovery solution?**  
"We're looking to cut costs by moving to open source and avoiding ongoing license fees." commented David Morris, Managing Director.

*"Therefore, from the time an order is entered into the system, to the time delivery takes place, access to the servers is essential for the process to run smoothly. This, combined with the customer requirement for 24 hour delivery makes our systems totally critical. We cannot afford the luxury of long periods of downtime"* David continued. *"As if this wasn't enough, we also use our servers for our Sage Accounts and back office systems"*

*"Our production runs 24 hours a day over 5 days, but our IT department works during office hours, this means*

*that we were having to call IT staff out of office hours whenever there was a problem. In addition, there was always an uncertainty over what would happen if our systems went down when our Systems IT Manager, Alex Johnson, was unavailable"*.

**What would be the implication of a server going down?**

*"All of our orders are processed and saved onto the servers, our accounts and CRM use Sage applications and our production relies upon the CNC machines having access to files to upload when producing orders. Loss of network or servers would mean no orders being processed, no invoices being produced, no management accounts, no email being received and no production taking place."*



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*"All of the problems we had experienced when considering other solutions were addressed by LifeKeeper and I am glad that this was borne out in the simple and effective installation process which concluded in October last year"*

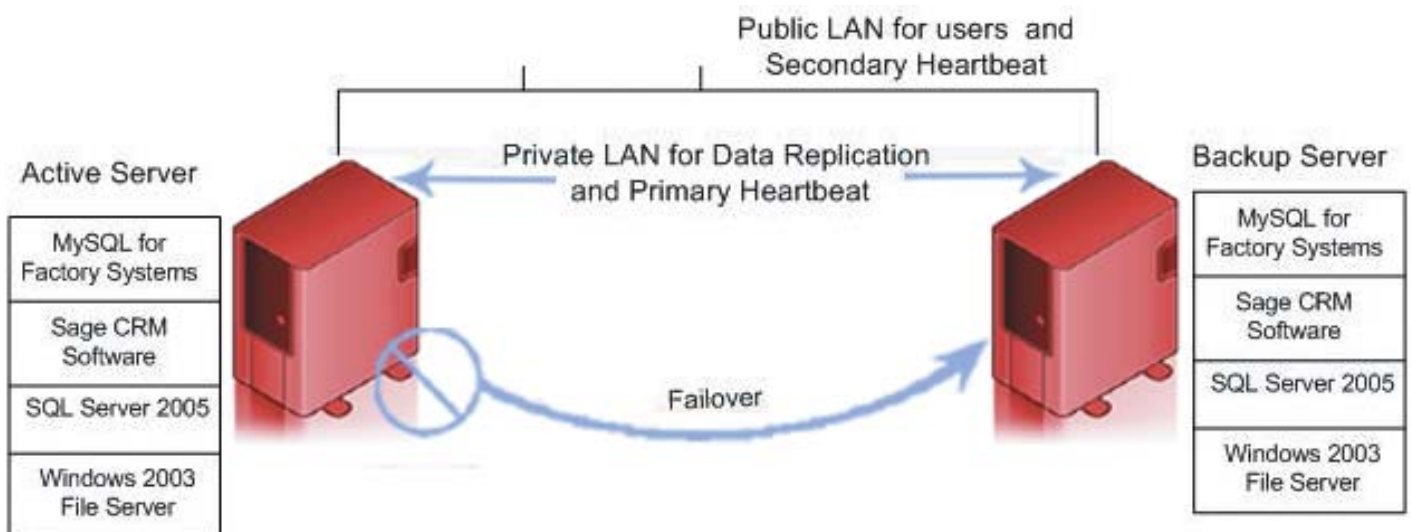
#### Can you quantify the cost of downtime for Kocher and Beck?

*"There are many costs relating to downtime. The financial cost alone would be well over £12,000 per day just in lost production and invoicing. In addition, there is also the cost of the loss in staff productivity. However, I believe that the main cost to the company would be the loss in customer confidence. Our credibility is what's really at stake if we don't deliver according to our promises."*

Alex was due to take a long holiday towards the end of 2007 and K&B focused their efforts on having a recovery solution in place one month before he went away. They had been looking for a solution for two years by then and had tried many different options including off site backups, cold standby servers and data replication solutions. When asked about why this project had taken so long, David replied *"For each of the solutions we looked at there was a stumbling block, most of them did not monitor the SQL application and failover, or they performed a part of what we wanted. Don't forget that it is not just about having a backup of the data and getting a standby server up and running, you also have to get the database reloaded, and, the most time consuming part is for someone to go to each client machine and reconfigure each client to point to the new server."*

K&B were introduced to LifeKeeper by Martin Stannage of Taylor Made Technology Ltd, they went to Open Minds to see a demonstration. *"When we saw LifeKeeper running and were shown a real file "pull the plug" demonstration of a server failover, we knew it was exactly what K&B had been looking for. It is a simple, easy to use and configure product which can replicate, monitor and failover our servers automatically. Martin added, "All of the problems we had experienced when considering other solutions were addressed by LifeKeeper and I am glad that this was borne out in the simple and effective installation process which concluded in October last year"*

SteelEye Technology's LifeKeeper software constantly monitors the health of K&B's critical applications, including their Windows Fileserver, SQL Server, and SAGE accounts systems. On detection of any problem, a recovery process is automatically launched. Typically, this involves restarting the application on another server within the IT cluster. Because the data has been replicated between the servers, all data associated with the application is immediately available to the newly active server. LifeKeeper also takes care of switching over all IP addresses, so that the current connections are seamlessly moved to the new server.



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*We have spent over 2 years looking for a solution and this really does work, it does what it says on the tin, I have no question at all about recommending the solutions to other parts of our group and other organisations that are looking for mirroring and failover".*

*"Most companies go around with their head in the sand or with their fingers crossed hoping that nothing bad will happen. Until recently we were one of those companies."*



**How was the installation of LifeKeeper and was there any downtime associated with it?**

*"We had no downtime when we installed LifeKeeper. Most of the preliminary work was done beforehand. We had bought an identical server as our backup server, and with the help of Open Minds and TMT, we installed our software and LifeKeeper prior to this. The new server became our live server while we were reloading and installing LifeKeeper on the second server. After that, it was a matter of just connecting it all up. Our production does not run on Saturday afternoons, and we used that time for the final implementation."*

Kocher and Beck used SteelEye Competence and Support Centre, Open Minds High Availability Solutions to assist them in the implementation of LifeKeeper. *"We found working with Open Minds was of prime importance. The people at Open Minds are clearly experts and our engineers really appreciate having the ability to phone someone locally who can resolve issues quickly and efficiently "* commented Martin Stannage of Taylor Made.

**Has there been an occasion when LifeKeeper 'saved the day'?**

Alex commented *"Yes, I was on holiday in November when a server failover occurred. Had the mirror not been in place, this would have resulted in lost production until a support visit could be performed by Taylor Made Technology. As LifeKeeper was in place, staff didn't even notice, and the problem was resolved without any disruption or panic".*

When asked what they thought of LifeKeeper now, both Alex and David gave it a glowing recommendation.

What of the future then? For now, the current systems will handle the level of load and there are no immediate plans to change them. However, as new software gets added, K&B will be looking to protect it with LifeKeeper as this is a solution they are happy with.

David's concluding remarks were, *"We have spent over 2 years looking for a solution and this really does work, it does what it says on the tin, I have no question at all about recommending the solutions to other parts of our group and other organisations that are looking for mirroring and failover".* He then added *"Most companies go around with their head in the sand or with their fingers crossed hoping that nothing bad will happen. Until recently we were one of those companies."*

With their production, sales and accounts being monitored and protected by LifeKeeper, 24 hour production can continue whether or not the IT department is on-site. As for Alex, he plans to go away on holiday more often and may even be able to switch off his mobile phone!!

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## About Open Minds High Availability Solutions Ltd ([www.openminds.co.uk](http://www.openminds.co.uk))

Open Minds are SteelEye's UK Support Centre, offering the full range of consulting and professional services to complement SteelEye's solutions. Open Minds provide mirroring and failover for both Windows and Linux as well as application recovery for software as variable as Exchange, SQL Server, MySQL, Oracle, to bespoke text based

and many non-standard applications. Many organisations, large and small, have used Open Minds to help them provide application recovery for their users by deploying the SteelEye LifeKeeper solution. Customers range from the BBC, FTSE and NewStar to Budget Insurance and Photo-me booths.

## About SteelEye Technology, Inc.

SteelEye is the leading provider of data and application availability management solutions for business continuity and disaster recovery for Linux and Windows. The SteelEye family of data replication,

high availability and disaster recovery solutions are priced and architected to enable enterprises of all sizes to ensure continuous availability of business-critical applications, servers and data.

## About Taylor Made Technology Ltd.

Established in 1989, Taylor Made Technology Ltd (formerly Taylor Made Training) supplies IT solutions to a variety of industry sectors throughout the East Midlands. Based in Glenfield, Leicestershire, TMT's core business is the sale, implementation and support of Sage business software. It also provides hardware and networking solutions

from a variety of vendors. TMT has grown steadily over the years through high customer retention and building an excellent reputation in the local market. In December 2007, Taylor Made Technology Ltd was acquired by Concentrix Ltd, a leading independent Business Solutions and CRM specialist.

## About Kocher & Beck

For nearly 15 years now, Kocher + Beck has had its own independent production plant in Leicestershire UK. Since 2002, it has operated from a new purpose built factory with a working area of 1,500 m<sup>2</sup>.

The UK plant, concentrates on the manufactures of flexible dies for the production of labels, envelopes business forms and cartons. All other Kocher + Beck products come from the German parent company.

This factory is equipped with the same ultra-modern machinery and systems for making flexible dies as Kocher + Beck Germany, this ensures consistency of product and the ability to provide our customers with exactly the same product from any of the manufacturing plants.

With 45 employees working in three shifts, the flexible dies produced, are, in terms of quality, among the best in the industr, and again are manufactured for export as well as for home consumption.