



“ I would not hesitate to recommend Coolspirit to any prospective customers. They are responsive, very easy to work with and tailor solutions to suit customer’s specific needs, resulting in very high customer satisfaction. ”

**Giovanni Goduti**  
CA Technologies – Recovery Management  
& Data Modeling Business Unit

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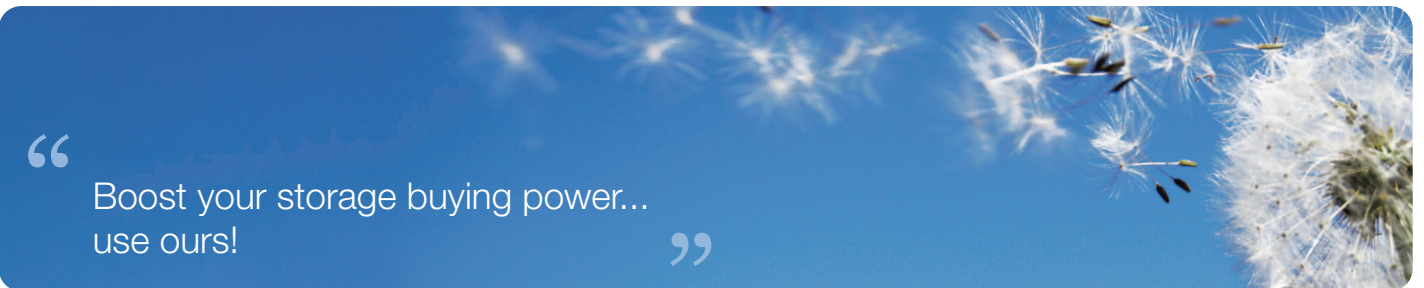
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CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY:  
ASCEND

# Ascend safeguards service availability for its worldwide client base with CA XOsoft Replication and CA ARCserve Backup.



## Customer Profile

Industry: Professional services  
Organization: Ascend  
Locations: UK, USA and Hong Kong

## Business Impact Summary

### Business:

Ascend has been providing the aviation industry with reliable and up-to-date information for over four decades. The company serves a worldwide client base via a network of offices in the UK, the US and Hong Kong.

### Challenge:

Ascend provides its customers with online access to business-critical data. The company must meet stringent service level agreements, which include responding to an email or telephone query within four hours. As a result, it needs a highly available email environment.

### Solution:

Ascend has deployed CA XOsoft™ Replication to replicate the 10-plus gigabytes of data that make up its Microsoft Exchange environment. In the event of a problem, the company can failover to its replica email server and provide staff with access to their mailboxes within 10 minutes. Ascend also uses CA ARCserve® Backup to safeguard all its company data.

### Result:

The CA Recovery Management solutions help Ascend minimise business downtime, thereby enabling it to maintain its ISO 9001 certification and customer service levels.



CA Customer Alliance Program



Transforming  
IT Management

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## Business

### Providing reliable aviation information

Ascend is the world's leading provider of specialist information and consultancy services to the global air transport industry. The company's origins go back to 1964. Its offerings include:

- Aviation fleet information
- Valuations and appraisals
- Technical and commercial solutions
- Market analysis
- Airport economics
- Space analytics

Ascend's worldwide client base includes banks, brokerages, lessors, manufacturers and aviation companies such as Rolls-Royce and PK AirFinance. The company's main offices are in London, New York and Hong Kong.

Ascend's growth plans are focused on increasing its product portfolio and expanding its international customer base.

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## Challenge

### Meeting service level agreements

Email is a crucial communication tool for Ascend. The company's UK offices receive approximately 30,000 emails every month. In addition to sales and general communication with vendors and partners, email is the cornerstone of Ascend's customer services.

As part of its services, Ascend provides its customers with online access to its databases of aviation information. In the event of a problem with this service, customers are quick to contact Ascend, via email or telephone, and expect a speedy resolution.

To meet its service level agreements, Ascend must respond to any queries within four hours of receiving them. Steve Davies, Service Delivery Manager at Ascend, comments, "The quality of our customer services relies upon staff having continuous access to email. If we do not meet service level agreements, we risk financial penalties."

In addition to its own stringent standards, Ascend is ISO 9001 certified. To maintain this certification, Ascend must achieve 98 percent systems availability for core applications such as email.

*"The quality of our customer services relies upon staff having continuous access to email. If we do not meet service level agreements, we risk financial penalties."*

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#### Steve Davies

Service Delivery Manager, Ascend

Although Ascend had invested heavily in business continuity processes and products, the company's initial data replication solution for its Microsoft Exchange environment had proven inadequate for its needs.

"We had numerous problems when we attempted to roll back to the primary server following a failover," comments Davies. "The product was also difficult to use and could only be operated by a qualified engineer. With email such an important tool for us, it was obvious that we had to re-invest in a more user-friendly solution."

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## Solution

### Simple and effective replication for the email environment

Following extensive evaluation and testing, Ascend deployed CA XOssoft™ Replication in 2007. "We implemented the CA solution in the morning using the online instruction manual and were replicating our email environment by the afternoon," comments Davies.

Ascend replicates data from its primary email server at its head office at Heathrow to its data centre on the outskirts of London. Around 10-15 gigabytes of data is replicated via Ascend's wide area network (WAN) and the CA Recovery Management solution.

In the event of an issue impacting the primary email server, CA XOssoft Replication provides automated alerts to Ascend's IT team. The team investigates the problem, and if deemed necessary invokes the failover server. As Davies explains, "The failover process is scripted, so we just have to press a button and update staff working at the affected offices. Email is up and running from the failover server within about 10 minutes — staff often don't even notice that there has been a problem."

### A comprehensive disaster recovery strategy

To enhance its business continuity capabilities, Ascend uses CA XOssoft Assured Recovery™ function, part of CA XOssoft Replication to test its replication process on a monthly basis without impacting the production environment.

"We have had to use CA XOssoft Replication in two real-life situations, both of which resulted in minimal downtime for our staff," comments Davies.

Ascend has also been using CA ARCserve® Backup as part of its disaster recovery provision for the last nine years. The solution is used to back up all the company's data overnight including:

- Human resources and finance information
- Microsoft SharePoint systems
- Web servers
- Business-critical aviation data provided to customers.

In total, 2,500 gigabytes of data from 60 servers and applications at Ascend's head office and data centre is backed up using the CA solution.

*"We implemented the CA solution in the morning using the online instruction manual and were replicating our email environment by the afternoon."*

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**Steve Davies**  
Service Delivery Manager, Ascend

*“By minimising downtime with the CA solutions we can ensure that we are able to respond to our customers quickly, thereby improving customer satisfaction and safeguarding profitability.”*

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**Steve Davies**

Service Delivery Manager, Ascend

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## Results

### Continuous and high-quality customer services

With CA XOssoft Replication and CA ARCserve Backup, Ascend is able to minimise the impact of a hardware failure or incident on the business and its customers.

The CA Recovery Management solutions require minimal manual intervention, which maximises the efficiency of Ascend’s small IT team. Crucially, in today’s tough economic environment, the solutions are also cost-effective.

“The fact that we were able to install CA XOssoft Replication ourselves helped to keep the initial capital expenditure low,” confirms Davies. “The CA solutions are also easy to manage in-house, which minimises ongoing operational costs.”

By basing its disaster recovery strategy on CA solutions, Ascend has been able to maintain:

- Minimal business downtime
- ISO 9001 certification
- Compliance with customer service level agreements

“The continuity and quality of services is very important for our customers,” comments Davies. “By minimising downtime with the CA solutions we can ensure that we are able to respond to our customers quickly, thereby improving customer satisfaction and safeguarding profitability.”

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