

CUSTOMER SUCCESS

# 888 Holdings

## 888 Holdings Holds the Four Aces in Data Protection

Far from taking a gamble, when it came to choosing the partner most suited to providing a centralized, high availability data center infrastructure, 888 Holdings rigorously studied the odds, scrutinized the market, and selected Veritas. Selected over a solution from CommVault®, Veritas NetBackup™ software supports 888 Holdings’ heterogeneous environment, protecting data and ensuring millions of customers can participate in blackjack, roulette, or craps whenever they want, knowing that the system will be available 24x7. The dice add up with Veritas Enterprise Vault™ too, which provides cost-effective, secure archiving for 888 Holding’s nearly 600 Exchange clients.

### Around-the-clock online casino, poker, and skill games

888 Holdings is one of the world’s most popular online gaming companies, offering a variety of online casino, poker, and skill games, plus access to a third party betting exchange through its various websites. These include 888.com, Casino-on-Net.com, PacificPoker.com, ReefClubCasino.com, 888.tv, 888.info, and Betmate.com. Over the years, 888.com has consistently been awarded “Best Online Casino” and “Best Online Operator of the Year’ at the eGaming Awards. The company is licensed and regulated by the Government of Gibraltar, where its headquarters are located.

To understand why 888 Holdings moved to centralize its server infrastructure under a unified, high availability umbrella, it’s necessary to explore some of the history of the Group. Founded in 1997 in the British Virgin Islands as Virtual Holdings Limited, an Antiguan subsidiary was quickly established where 888 Holdings based its management, gaming servers, and member support functions. The following year, business acquisitions led to another office being set up in Tel-Aviv, Israel. In 2002, an additional marketing office was set up in London to source offline advertising in the UK. In 2003, the company obtained a gaming license in Gibraltar, where it transferred the services previously provided in Antigua.

This acquisitive, global strategy, along with continual development of new, innovation solutions, has helped 888 Holdings to become one of the leaders in this fast-growing market. The downside of this growth has been a complex set of requirements—demanding service level agreements (SLAs), zero maintenance windows, and punishing penalties for downtime.

### Organization profile

Website: [www.888holdingsplc.com](http://www.888holdingsplc.com)

Industry: Leisure Services

Founded: 1997

Headquarters: Gibraltar, U.K.

### Veritas solution

Archiving

Data Protection

Endpoint Security

### Why Veritas?

- Cost effective solution
- Heterogeneous platform support
- Real-time operational monitoring

An imminent public offering, combined with the associated compliance and auditing requirements, drove the firm to reduce its multi-site data center strategy from four centers around the world to one centralized operations hub. The business goal was to create sustainable shareholder value by providing gaming members with a comprehensive selection of gaming activities and ensuring they received a secure, trustworthy entertainment experience. At a technical level, the firm was looking to optimize data availability, reduce the cost of IT management, and ensure unrivalled server performance. An added advantage of the strategy was to enable closer alignment between the demanding IT goals and 888 Holdings' business strategy.

### **Downtime was unacceptable in the 24x7 gaming environment**

Ziv Oren, vice president of technologies, 888 Holdings, explains the background to Veritas becoming the preferred supplier for this data-centric strategy. "We were running multiple applications, each with a different SLA," he says. "Downtime is simply unacceptable in the online gaming environment, so we needed to centralize our environments around a unified, secure 24x7 hub. This was not only to support 888 Holdings own gaming services, but also the ones we support on behalf of our partners."

With Veritas and CommVault quickly shortlisted, an intensive period of evaluation began. However, Oren and his team in Israel were soon convinced by the scope and capability of the Veritas proposition. And the support was very strong too. "We already knew Veritas was one of the biggest players in the IT market—and a leading contender in the Windows data protection market. However, the deciding factor in choosing Veritas over CommVault was the heterogeneous platform support. The NetBackup open

<p><b>Solution at a glance</b></p> <p><b>Key challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Ensure gaming services are available any time of the day or night</li><li>▪ Protect heterogeneous operating environment</li><li>▪ Remove historical Microsoft® Exchange data to cheaper storage platforms</li></ul> <p><b>Veritas products</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Veritas NetBackup™</li><li>▪ Veritas Enterprise Vault™</li><li>▪ Symantec™ Endpoint Protection</li></ul> <p><b>Technology environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Operating systems: Microsoft® Windows®, UNIX®, Linux®</li><li>▪ Database: Microsoft SQL®</li><li>▪ Servers: 1,000 HP Blade production servers</li><li>▪ Storage: EMC® Symmetrix and CLARiON® (disk-to-disk-to-tape backup), NetApp</li></ul>	<p><b>Business values and technical benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Reduced the risk of downtime, enabling customers to enjoy a disruption-free, online gaming experience</li><li>▪ Provided real-time operational monitoring, management, and alerting</li><li>▪ Enabled transparent support for multiple operating systems</li><li>▪ Increased efficiency through central management of deployed storage technologies</li><li>▪ Provided granular recovery of critical applications, including VMware and SQL, Microsoft Active Directory®, and file servers</li><li>▪ Enabled the company to manage endpoint security from a single standpoint</li><li>▪ Supported archiving of rarely used unstructured information on lower cost storage</li><li>▪ Helped reduce storage, backup, and helpdesk costs</li><li>▪ Simplified Exchange email management</li></ul>
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architecture means transparent and equal support for 888 Holdings' Microsoft, Linux, and UNIX operating systems."

888 Holdings has implemented NetBackup to provide one unified backup client to monitor and support up to 800 (primarily HP) production servers and another 200 servers in their test environment. Monitoring and managing this growth was becoming more and more complex for the team, so the intuitive Web-based graphical user interface for NetBackup provides the 888 administrators with real-time operational monitoring, management, troubleshooting, and alerting across the NetBackup domains. Moreover, NetBackup increases efficiency by managing all the deployed data protection technologies from one location.

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**"Veritas is a true strategic vendor."**

Ziv Oren  
Vice President Technologies  
888 Holdings

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### **Helping ensure the granular recovery of critical gaming applications**

888 Holdings is also using NetBackup to help ensure the granular recovery of critical applications such as the expanding VMware virtualized server infrastructure, up to 60 SQL servers, Active Directory, and file servers. Among a wide range of other features, NetBackup is helping enhance 888 Holdings' security by ensuring the identity of the individuals that access the data and that tapes taken offsite are encrypted. The three-tier architecture

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Ziv Oren  
Vice President Technologies  
888 Holdings

scales with the growing demand for gaming services worldwide, and the solution offers first class performance, using synthetic backups to consume less network bandwidth and decrease the impact on the application host.

For Oren the value of NetBackup can be measured in the sustainability of the business. “Most organizations, whether they are banks or telcos, temporarily halt their web services for maintenance or other reasons at some time or other. However, every one of our gaming websites—888.com, Casino-on-Net.com, or PacificPoker.com—needs to be operational 24x7. If inaccessible, our customer can’t enjoy the gaming experience, and we risk losing them to our competitors. With the Veritas data protection solution, we have the confidence in knowing that our systems are available 24x7 to support our customers’ online gaming experience.”

He is also interested in the latest release of NetBackup and its enhanced support for virtualization. “Virtualization is a way of life in our business. We’re excited about introducing virtualized servers, and there’s no doubt the complete, easy-to-use NetBackup virtualization functionality will have a major role to play here.”

888 Holdings has also recently deployed Enterprise Vault to support the archiving of less-frequently used unstructured information from high-cost disk to lower cost storage—while ensuring it remains accessible. PST files were placing a considerable burden on the system, staff was spending an increasing amount of time administering users’ mailboxes, and the company was struggling to backup the Exchange environment within the backup window. At the forefront of the email archiving initiative was a desire to increase employee productivity. Regulation is now becoming a key issue in the emerging

gaming market, and by securely archiving the data, the company is one step ahead of any compliance requirements that may arise in the future.

During the pilot phase, Oren’s team is archiving the Microsoft Exchange environment for up to 600 clients. Oren explains why they’re doing it. “Although it’s early into the pilot, we can already see that Enterprise Vault will be a valuable asset in reducing storage, backup, and help desk costs by making better use of our existing storage assets. By automating the migration of older data to the archive, Enterprise Vault will also help simplify overall email management.”

He adds, “NetBackup and Enterprise Vault offer 888 Holdings the flexibility to create an effective data protection and high availability solution, while adapting to the changing needs of our business. Veritas is a true strategic vendor.”

Completing the expansive Veritas environment is Symantec Endpoint Protection. “It’s a scary world out there, and my primary responsibility is IT security,” Oren explains. “We must maintain a balance of usability and control over the company’s most important assets. We already had a Veritas antivirus solution, but we wanted to go further. The significant benefit is that the suite can be managed from a single location. There are thousands of endpoints to support, and we can configure Endpoint Protection to prohibit staff from connecting USB sticks, phones, cameras, or other devices to the network. That’s a key advantage. The other deciding factor was the name on the box—Veritas.”

Whether they’re playing blackjack, roulette, or craps online through one of 888 Holdings’ websites, customers don’t need to take a gamble on the site being available or secure.