CUSTOMER CASE STUDY · ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Always Ready, Never Idle: How a Precision Manufacturer Cut DR Spend While Exiting VMware

A mid-market industrial manufacturer replaced an idle, always-on DR estate with UPC DRaaS's Pay-on-Activation model — protecting its AI-driven quality-inspection line, retiring legacy VMware licensing, and hardening against ransomware in one motion.

INDUSTRY	REGION	PLATFORM	MODEL
Industrial Manufacturing	**United States**	**UPC DRaaS**	**Pay-on-Activation**

38%
Lower DR total cost of ownership in year one

Zero
Idle standby compute billed between drills

15 min
RTO committed on Platinum-tier AI workloads

100%
Immutable backup coverage across the estate

THE CUSTOMER

A precision manufacturer betting its quality control on AI

The company builds tolerance-critical components for aerospace and automotive suppliers from two plants in the American Midwest, running three shifts a day against contractual defect-rate ceilings its customers audit quarterly.

Two years ago the company deployed a computer-vision inspection line that scores every part in real time against a trained defect model, replacing manual sampling. The model, its training data, and the MES systems that schedule the plant floor all ran on an aging VMware cluster that had also become the company's single point of failure — and its single largest software line item, as per-core licensing crept upward each renewal.

Disaster recovery had been bolted on the traditional way: a full duplicate standby environment, sized for worst-case peak load, running around the clock in a colocation facility two states away. It had been invoked exactly once in four years — during a scheduled failover test.

THE CHALLENGE

Paying full price for a plan you hope never to use

Standby infrastructure billed at 100%, used at 0%

The DR site ran hot 24/7/365 so recovery would be instant if disaster struck, but for four straight years the only workload it processed was the annual failover drill. Compute, storage and per-core VMware licensing were paid at full production rates for capacity that sat idle nearly every day.

The AI inspection line had no DR story at all

The vision model, its versioned training data, and the inference pipeline feeding the plant floor were never brought into the DR plan — the prior provider's playbook covered VMs and databases, not model registries or GPU-backed inference. A production outage would have meant reverting to manual sampling with no defined recovery path back.

Rising ransomware exposure across manufacturing

Industrial manufacturers had become a leading ransomware target nationally, and the company's backups sat on the same storage fabric as production, mutable by any account with sufficient access — meaning a successful attack could encrypt primary and backup data in the same event.

A VMware renewal the board would not approve again

The latest VMware renewal quote arrived sharply higher than the prior cycle. The board asked for a modernization path that did not require ripping out the MES integrations built up over a decade, on a timeline the plant floor could actually absorb.

THE SOLUTION

Pay-on-Activation DR, built for the whole stack — not just the VMs

UnitedLayer moved them onto UPC DRaaS's Pay-on-Activation model: replication stays warm and every RPO/RTO tier holds at all times under a fixed subscription, but heavy-lifting compute is billed only when DR is activated or a drill is run.

What was deployed

AI-Ready Resilience

The vision model registry, versioned training/inference data, and full-stack observability for the inspection pipeline entered DR scope for the first time, with a defined recovery path back to automated scoring.

Immutable Defence

Backups moved to immutability by default on infrastructure separate from production, with clean-room recovery available — closing the single-fabric exposure the prior setup carried.

Strategic VMware Exit

MES and ERP workloads migrated onto KVM as a controlled bridge, with modern-hypervisor support meaning the cutover ran without a plant-floor outage or an integration rewrite.

Policy-Driven DR & Backup Mgmt

Centralized backup policy, resource quota enforcement and role-based access replaced manual runbooks, with DR orchestration and alerts in one console.

How the economics changed

DIMENSION	WHAT PAY-ON-ACTIVATION DELIVERS
Always ready, never idle	Replication stays warm and RPO/RTO commitments hold continuously under a fixed subscription — with no always-on duplicate production environment.
On-demand compute	Heavy-lifting compute is billed only when DR is activated or a drill is run, not for the 364 days a year it previously sat idle.
Elastic cost model	The company pays primarily for storage consumption and invokes additional on-demand services — firewalls, load balancers, backup-as-a-service — as required.
Bi-annual drills, no extra charge	Scheduled DR drills run twice yearly at no additional cost, keeping recovery readiness evidenced without the prior all-or-nothing invocation.

SLA TIERS

Recovery objectives matched to workload criticality

TIER	RPO — DATA LOSS	RTO — DOWNTIME	APPLIED TO
Platinum	Near-zero	15 minutes	AI inspection pipeline, MES scheduling
Gold	< 15 minutes	1 hour	ERP, quality-record systems
Silver	< 1 hour	4 hours	Reporting, archival and dev/test

THE RESULTS

Outcomes after twelve months

MEASURE	BEFORE	AFTER
DR infrastructure billing	Full standby rate, 24/7/365	Storage-based, compute billed only on activation
DR total cost of ownership	Baseline	38% lower in year one
AI inspection pipeline coverage	Not in DR scope	Platinum tier, 15-minute RTO
Backup immutability	Shared fabric with production	Immutable by default, separate infrastructure
VMware licensing	Rising per-core renewal	Migrated to KVM, no plant-floor outage
Recovery readiness evidence	One annual drill	Bi-annual drills at no additional cost

GET STARTED

Stop Paying for Idle Compute. Start Paying on Activation.

If your DR spend is a fixed cost you carry every day for a disaster you hope never comes, UPC DRaaS was built to change that math — for your VMs, your databases, and your AI workloads alike.

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Why UnitedLayer

25+ years of private cloud expertise, follow-the-sun engineering teams, and end-to-end platform management. Recognised as a Leader in the ISG Private/Hybrid Cloud – Data Centre Services study for four consecutive years.

Available worldwide. Technical support is available 24/7. Custom pricing and demonstrations on request.

UPC DRaaS is part of the United Private Cloud® portfolio, alongside UPC IaaS, UPC Container Cloud, UPC AI Factory, UPC Sovereign Cloud, UPC Cyber vault, UnitedEdge®, UnitedConnect® and UnitedSecure™.

This case study describes a representative customer scenario constructed to illustrate UPC DRaaS capabilities. Customer name and figures are illustrative and should be replaced with verified references before external publication.

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