

Managing the value of data

By [Claude Schuck](#)

14 Jun 2017

The value of data is something that has progressed from a technology discussion into a business imperative. No organisation can survive in the always-on environment without having access to data. Fortunately, better business resiliency is to be had by leveraging the foundation put in place by IT.



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For long, technology was removed from the business discussion. If anything, IT departments were relegated to managing the hardware and software within the company and had few opportunities to provide guidance on strategy. But thanks to the evolution taking place within the end-user market, technology has very much become a priority on the corporate agenda.

In fact, the recently published [Veeam Availability Report](#) shows that more companies are considering cloud as a viable springboard to their digital agenda. Software-as-a-service investment is expected to increase by more than 50% in the next 12 months. Indeed, almost half of IT leaders surveyed (43%) believe cloud providers can deliver better service levels for mission-critical data than their internal IT processes.

Consumers and other stakeholders are reliant on mobile devices to access information wherever they are. This, in turn, is putting pressure on the company to ensure that there is secure and reliable access to important data irrespective of physical location. So, even though data has become fundamental to business success, it has become vital for the technology associated with managing and safeguarding it to contribute to business efficiency efforts, rather than harming them.

Changing digital dynamic

One of the business challenges that need to be overcome is how best to integrate new technologies and ways of doing things with existing systems and structures. Even though decision-makers must balance between these two extreme conditions, ensuring that data backup and recovery systems continue to work must remain at the forefront of any strategy.

Complicating matters further is often the high initial cost of embarking on the digital journey.

“ After all, transforming the fundamental layer of the business is not without risks nor expenses. ”

The Veeam report has found that most senior IT leaders (66%) feel digital transformation efforts are held back by unplanned downtime of services caused by cyber-attacks, infrastructure failures, network outages, and natural disasters (with server outages lasting an average of 85 minutes per incident).

Yet, downtime and data loss now see enterprises face public scrutiny in ways that cannot be measured by a balance sheet alone. Veeam research shows that almost half of enterprises see a loss of customer confidence, and 40% experienced damage to brand integrity, which affect both brand reputation and customer retention. Additionally, the research has found that the average annual cost of downtime for organisations in the study totalled more than R270m.

The rise of the protection gap

Beyond pure availability, Veeam has identified a protection gap inside enterprises. This is the inability of IT to protect organisational data frequently enough, exceeding the tolerance of the business for that lost data. As such, 77% of enterprises are experiencing this with their expectations for uptime consistently being unmet due to insufficient protection mechanisms and policies.

Although companies state that they can only tolerate 72 minutes per year of data loss within 'high priority' applications, the findings show respondents really experience 127 minutes of data loss.

Companies across industry sectors have already started towards this path to digital transformation. For customers and other stakeholders, this is resulting in a pro-active approach to data, enhancing its value, and ensuring it is protected. Imperative to all of this is availability that lies at the heart of digital transformation.

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