

White Paper:

Five Key Questions for Assessing Backup and Recovery Solutions

When you lose data, the *only* thing that really counts is your ability to restore your systems and data in a timely manner.

What level of confidence do you have in your current solution?

Bill, the IT Director at a law firm, received the emergency call at 6am. A pipe had ruptured in the firm's building and the server room was flooded. Bill knew it was going to be a long few days. First he'd have to repair or probably replace the hardware, spend hours rebuilding the system software, retrieve the right tapes from an offsite storage facility and then restore the data.

Theoretically, it would take several long days of effort but should all work just fine. Unfortunately for Bill, reality set in. After replacing the hardware and installing the system software, many of the firm's data tapes were unreadable and they lost 50% of their data.

Your Backup and Recovery Needs - Five Key Questions

There are five key questions you should ask when assessing what you need in a backup and recovery solution:

1. Which data, applications, and servers will, if lost, impact your business functions and in what timeframe?
2. What are the technologies hosting this information today and in the foreseeable future (hardware, virtual machines, operating systems, database, heterogeneous platforms)?
3. In the event of a loss, how quickly do you need to get the data back and systems running again?
4. Which personnel would be involved in the recovery process?
5. Where would your recovery happen should you lose access to critical servers or your complete site?

These are questions about which every stakeholder in your company may possibly have a different opinion. There is no one right answer. The best you can do is to understand the tradeoffs on each of these dimensions so

you can make the proper value assessment when selecting a backup solution.

Once you understand your business' situation and priorities, compare your requirements to the features and services offered by a data protection vendor. There are many companies that offer backup solutions from traditional tape-based systems, to onsite disk-to-disk storage and/or online cloud services. Some of the solutions are expensive while some cloud-based solutions can cost the equivalent of only a few Starbucks' coffees a month. The variability in pricing can be directly traced to the functionality and delivery of service, especially in the area of recovery.

As you evaluate the many choices, on the surface they may look similar but there are significant differences in the areas of security and infrastructure, supported technology and flexibility, management and ease of use, and customer service. The following sections explore these critical areas in more detail.

Security and Infrastructure

Solutions have varying degrees of security built from the ground up. Does the solution include end-to-end encryption both in motion and at rest? What encryption levels are supported? Who has access to the encryption key? Does the solution offer compression and deduplication to significantly reduce the amount of data being transferred and reduce the backup window? For cloud services, what hardware, storage, rack space, bandwidth, and power are standard components offered? What levels of security and infrastructure are needed to meet your industry regulations and compliance requirements?

VAULT400 Data Protection Solutions from UCG are highly secure, offering end-to-end encryption both in motion and at rest. Your company is the sole owner of the encryption key; even UCG cannot access the data. VAULT400 cloud-based data centers are maintained with best of breed hardware, preemptive predictable monitoring and RAID 5+ redundancy, to ensure you never lose your data.

Supported Technology and Flexibility

What data protection capabilities are offered by the solution? Some solutions protect only Windows servers and desktops. Others can cover more heterogeneous environments that include UNIX, Linux, VMware,

“When we had a tape backup system, it took about four hours to run a backup. With VAULT400, it takes about an hour, so we've recovered about three hours of processing time.”

Mike Lemon, IT Manager
Corrpro Companies

“Myself and my staff have gained valuable exposure and seen firsthand how VAULT400 will perform in the event of a crisis. If we ever have a system-wide crash, I’m comfortable we’ll be able to recover for it quickly. Of that, I have no doubt.”

Jeff Lutz,
VP of Information Systems
Crane Plumbing

“You name them and I’ve looked at them. System shops don’t just run RPG-based applications anymore so we wanted to make sure that the vaulting solution we picked ran on i5/OS, AIX, Windows, Lotus Notes, Sun, and a number of other operating systems. VAULT400 addresses ALL of these.”

Thom Davidson, Partner
Rippe & Kingston

AIX, IBMi, and other platforms. Is the software common across the supported technologies? Some solutions support multiple platforms but with different software making management of the solutions more burdensome and data restoration more difficult. VAULT400 supports a wide range of platforms with common technologies and the same interface across all platforms.

What level on the application stack requires protection? Should you need to replace hardware, you may spend hours or days reinstalling the OS, applying patches, reinstalling drivers and applications, and reconfiguring the machine before you can recover the data. Bare metal restore software automates this work for you. Moving to the top of the stack, Oracle databases, Exchange, SQL Server, SharePoint all require custom protection to guarantee optimized backup performance as well as full application recoverability. When evaluating various solutions, understand what it will take to recover your servers, data and applications.

How quickly will you need to recover? Internet recoveries are limited by the Internet connection speeds as well as network latencies. Does the solution offer the ability to physically ship data to your site? Is there an option to store a cache of the data onsite for quick, LAN-speed recoveries? Can you restore data to a different serial number and operating environment then it was initially backed-up from?

VAULT400 provides a number of different products and service options to assist you during disaster recovery including: bare metal restore, offsite replication service, remote disaster recovery service, and quick ship of pre-loaded hardware with an entire system or a large amount of data.

Management and Ease-of-Use

Control of the data protection solution from a single, centralized location minimizes the effort required to reconfigure backup jobs and schedules. Can you centrally manage backup and recovery in remote offices? Will you receive regular email status reports? How much time will need to be allocated to manage the ongoing daily process? How easy will the restore process be? VAULT400 provides a consistent, easy to use, centrally managed environment for local and remote management of your backups and recovery. The set-it-and-forget-it nature of VAULT400 significantly reduces the amount of time needed to manage backups on a daily basis.



“Deciding to go with UCG’s VAULT400 was an easy decision. I have peace of mind knowing that our data will be there when we need it. Current copies are stored in three locations. We don’t have to move disks around and we don’t have a bad disk or bad tape take us by surprise”

Jeff Bolkovatz,
Director of IT
Jenson USA

For online solutions, what management is happening behind the scenes? Is data validation, optimization of the backup pools and server health checks tasks completed on a daily basis? How frequently is new storage provisioned, are servers replaced and software updated? The hours devoted to these processes ensure compliance with the SLAs specified.

Customer Service

Support spans the lifecycle of your data protection solution: from selection to deployment to regular operations. What level of education will your business need to choose a solution, and where can you obtain that guidance? Who will be responsible for deployment and installation? Is training available with the package? What is the average turnaround time on your operational questions and issues? In the event of a disaster, how quickly can you get a live person on the phone? Make sure to obtain the correct balance of support with your in-house expertise.

With incredibly high customer satisfaction, UCG provides customer service with the same passion as if your data is our own. Our world-class customer support team maximizes your investments in our services and software by providing state-of-the-tools and services to ensure you succeed.

Putting It All Together

As you assess data protection solutions, including the one you are using now, it is critical to understand how the solution meets the five key questions for your organization’s needs. In addition, how does the solution compare in the critical areas of security and infrastructure, supported technology and flexibility, management and ease of use, and customer service? Go with a solution that meets your needs and provides you with the best technology and services for your peace of mind.

Put your trust in VAULT400 Data Protection Solutions

There are many choices for backup but putting your trust in a company with proven, reliable solutions for recovery of your data is crucial. Thousands of end users trust VAULT400 Data Protection Solutions to ensure their mission critical data is always available when they need it. Proven solutions and services provide the flexibility you need to employ the most cost-effective backup and recovery solution. UCG’s long-term partnership approach and quick response helps customers find savings over time and *backup and recovery you can believe in*.

To learn more Visit: www.vault400.com | www.ucgrp.com

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