

PricewaterhouseCoopers South Africa Revolutionizes Data Protection with Veeam



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— Pieter Kruger
Senior Manager for Hosted Services
PricewaterhouseCoopers South Africa

The Business Challenge

As the IT infrastructure at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) South Africa approached complete virtualization and centralized strategic applications on Vblock™ Systems, the firm's legacy backup tool was no longer sustainable. Recovering virtual machines (VMs) had become a lengthy process, often taking days, and limited monitoring and reporting capabilities made managing the VMware vSphere environment containing nearly 400 VMs quite challenging.

Pieter Kruger, Senior Manager for Hosted Services at PricewaterhouseCoopers South Africa, said he and his colleagues needed more efficient and effective VM recovery and more insight into their virtual environment so they could be more proactive in issue resolution.

"We wanted a more agile backup and recovery solution that was suited specifically to the virtual environment, not something that was bolted on to a product designed for the physical environment," Kruger explained. "We also wanted to back up our VMs to disk using deduplication because backing up to tape and storing tapes offsite had made the day-to-day file-level recovery process longer than it needed it to be.

"Administration had to be simplified as well," Kruger continued. "We were tired of deploying agents on every VM to be backed up. Replication was a consideration too, but it wasn't one of our main criterion. If we could find a solution with built-in replication, we'd consider that a bonus."

Kruger said he and his colleagues also wanted deeper visibility into their virtual environment, giving them desperately needed insight.

"We wanted automated, 24x7 monitoring capabilities because manually monitoring our VMs was not giving us the information we needed to manage them. We also wanted reports that would help us assess performance and utilization in our virtual environment, as well as troubleshooting features so we could resolve issues faster. We wanted to be proactive with regard to VMware management, not reactive."

Industry

Financial services

Company



PricewaterhouseCoopers South Africa provides tax, assurance and advisory solutions to businesses, financial institutions, governments and public agencies in seven Southern African countries. Headquartered in Johannesburg, the firm employs 6,500 people in offices throughout the region.

The Veeam Solution

PwC South Africa deployed Veeam® Availability Suite™ to improve data protection, visibility and control in its virtual environment.

Veeam Availability Suite is a powerful, easy-to-use, agentless and affordable solution designed specifically for virtualization that provides VMware vSphere and Microsoft Hyper-V backup, replication, recovery, monitoring, reporting and capacity planning.

"Veeam has revolutionized the way we protect our data," Kruger said. "We have complete trust in our backup environment now, and we're confident we can achieve a 100% successful recovery rate. We're not worried about corrupt backups anymore. When we get requests for restores, we can have the data at our fingertips almost immediately with Veeam. Since deploying Veeam, we've never looked back or had a second thought about failed backups."

PwC South Africa uses Veeam to back up all VMs onsite each day at its main datacenter in Johannesburg and to replicate 85 of them each night to a DR site 50 kilometers away in Pretoria.

"Another reason we chose Veeam is because it helps us meet security requirements more efficiently," Kruger said. "We're required to keep tapes of backed up data offsite for a period of time, but storing tapes offsite makes day-to-day VM or file-level recoveries time-consuming because the tapes have to be requested from third-party vendors."

"With Veeam's WAN optimization and tape support, we can send our backups across the WAN to Pretoria and offload them to tape once a month. We'll meet regulatory requirements and be able to restore VMs faster and easier."

Before implementing Veeam Availability Suite, the IT team tested three backup tools, including its legacy tool.

The biggest difference team members noticed between Veeam and their legacy tool was an improved deduplication ratio in Lotus Notes' backups—Veeam's was 30% better. Veeam's deduplication, compression and forever-incremental backup reduce backup storage costs for most companies by up to 70%.

Kruger said Veeam was more agile than the other backup tools in recovering VMs and individual items, taking minutes when the other tools took hours or days.

"Instant VM Recovery™ is my favorite feature in Veeam," he explained. "Being able to boot a VM directly from a backup and restore it in minutes was a game-changer for us. That's one of the reasons why Veeam provides much better overall value than the other backup tools. If we look specifically at cost, Veeam was 20% less expensive than our legacy tool."

In addition to delivering data protection, Veeam Availability Suite gives PwC South Africa deep visibility into its virtual environment, advanced monitoring of resources and at-a-glance reporting and detailed documentation of performance, availability and utilization.

"Before Veeam, we had to keep an eye on certain VMs," Kruger said. "When colleagues phoned to say they were having a problem accessing an application, we had to manually monitor the VM to determine what issues were going on. It took quite a bit of time to isolate exactly what was causing the issues. We didn't have historical data to consult."

"With Veeam, we can pull reports over almost any period of time and determine exactly which component is causing issues," he continued. "With a few ticks, we can fix the problem in minutes, saving us countless hours every month."

Challenge

- Recovering VMs with the legacy backup tool could take days.
- Proactive issue resolution in the virtual environment was impossible due to limited monitoring and reporting capabilities

Solution

Veeam Availability Suite

Veeam's troubleshooting features, such as an alert dashboard, single-click drill-down and knowledge base articles also help the IT team resolve issues faster.

"Being able to click on an alert and immediately see an article that points you in the right direction toward a solution saves so much time compared to searching for an answer online. Veeam enables us to be more proactive in sorting out issues before they become problems."

The IT team also relies on Veeam to generate reports on performance and utilization. When a VM running a tax compliance application had performance problems, team members used reports to trend usage on existing resources in the VM. They discovered usage increased exponentially on a weekly basis, so they increased the VM's resources to resolve the performance issue. Eventually the team appointed another VM and split the workload between the two.

"This usage would have been impossible to trend without Veeam's monitoring and reporting," Kruger said. "Something else that would be impossible to do without Veeam is business categorization. We categorize VMs by business unit to see which units use the most resources on any given VM or datastore, giving us valuable insight into the amounts of RAM, CPU and disk capacity used per unit. Veeam Availability Suite is a great product, and it has made a massive difference in our virtual environment."

The Results

- **Delivers modern data protection built for virtualization**

Like many companies, PwC South Africa hoped its legacy backup solution for physical servers would perform as well with VMs. It did not. After testing several alternatives, members of the IT team chose Veeam Availability Suite to help them modernize their data protection strategy while mitigating daily management risks. With Veeam they recover whole VMs or individual items in minutes rather than days, and they proactively resolve issues in the virtual environment before the issues become problems.

- **Meets security requirements more efficiently**

When the IT team created a list of requirements for a better backup and recovery solution, replication was a consideration but not a top requirement. According to Kruger, Veeam replication was a bonus. He and his colleagues can meet security requirements for offsite storage more resourcefully by replicating VMs from their main datacenter to their DR site with Veeam's Built-In WAN Optimization and Native Tape Support.

- **Provides complete visibility through monitoring and alerting**

Veeam Availability Suite installs prebuilt alerts and provides 24x7 real-time monitoring so IT teams are assured they'll be notified right away if problems occur. When something does need their attention, intuitive dashboards, performance graphs and a complete knowledge base ensure they have the data and information they need to resolve issues quickly.

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About Veeam Software

Veeam® has pioneered a new market of *Availability for the Always-On Enterprise™* to help companies solve the challenges of keeping their businesses up and running at all times. Veeam enables the Always-On Business™ with solutions that provide recovery time and point objectives (RTPO™) of less than 15 minutes for virtualized applications and data.

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