



## ▶ 5 Important Questions to Ask Before You Renew Your Existing Backup Software

Data and information management is becoming increasingly complex and dynamic. There are innovations in technology and process that can supply new advantages. Assess your options based on these five questions before making this critical decision.





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## ▶ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

You have a big decision that has been weighing on you, something that comes up every few years, and now it is hanging over your head again – should you renew your existing backup software maintenance contract, or is it time to try upgrade to a new platform? This decision is a difficult one because there are so many new options in the market, a myriad of variables to consider, financial implications in an ever-tightening budget scenario and an increasingly dynamic IT environment that it must support, both for today's needs and the ones that will come up over the life of the contract.

Over the years, many companies have re-signed with their traditional backup solution provider because the benefits of changing were not obvious. But data and information management and protection is becoming increasingly complex and dynamic, and there are innovations in technology and process that can supply new advantages with the pace of change in backup and archive innovation increasing dramatically over the last five years. You feel the pains every day, and you see that it's only going to get worse as you look out on the immediate horizon – unprecedented data growth, datacenter consolidation and server virtualization are creating turmoil with conventional approaches to backup and recovery. In this environment, storage demands are consuming scarce enterprise resources, there is too much data to protect within operational windows, you want to consider new models, like cloud computing, and complexity has continued to mount with the proliferation of point solutions.

Organizations are voicing the opinion that backup needs to improve a lot, not just a little. The ongoing frustration with backup implies that the data protection approaches of the past may no longer suffice in meeting current — much less future — recovery requirements. As such, many companies are willing to adopt new technologies and products from new vendors, and they have shown an increased willingness to augment or even completely switch backup and recovery providers to better meet their increasing service-level needs, overall cost requirements and ease of management needs.<sup>1</sup>

There is some good news, though. By taking a structured approach based on a few key questions, you can quickly identify the key considerations to pursue that will eliminate the pains of this process and enable you to make a smart and informed decision about making a change. This paper outlines five key questions to ask internally in order to help you highlight the current state of your backup solution and evaluate whether developments in data management software merit changing from your existing solution. These questions should also be posed to the backup software vendors you are currently using and those you are considering in order to understand their ability to meet your needs. The answers they provide may surprise you.

“Data and information management and protection is becoming increasingly complex and dynamic...”

<sup>1</sup> Gartner Inc. “Gartner Magic Quadrant for Data Center Backup and Recovery Software” by Dave Russell, Robert Rhame, Pushan Rinnen. June 2016.

## ▶ **FIRST QUESTION: OPTIMIZING YOUR ENVIRONMENT**

**Q:** How is your current backup solution helping you to optimize your environment?

Containing costs, and subsequently getting more with less, is a perennial focus for IT executives, one that is made ever more challenging by the growth of data, applications and business demands. If your existing backup solution is not helping you drastically optimize your environment, then it might be time for a change. But what should you look for when it comes to optimization? There are a few key areas to scrutinize in determining the extent to which your backup solution will contribute to optimization and help you tame the beast of rising costs as shown in Figure 1.

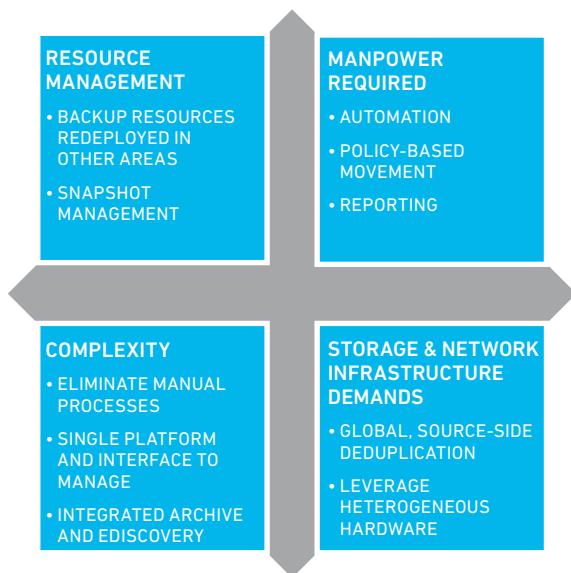


FIGURE 1: KEY FACTORS FOR BACKUP OPTIMIZATION

## ▶ **SECOND QUESTION: TECHNICAL/OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

**Q:** How effectively is your current backup software solution meeting your technical and operational requirements?

How your backup software is meeting your technical and operational requirements forms the foundation for the direction to go with this important decision. Have you experienced difficulty meeting SLAs, recovering data, adhering to compliance mandates or keeping up as your environment has evolved? Key factors to consider with respect to technical/operational requirements focus on your current software's ability to:

- Easily scale and efficiently handle data growth
- Protect your data within available backup windows – even as the amount of data grows
- Achieve impeccable success rates for backup and recovery

- Ensure data is protected at the edge, including remote sites and desktop, laptops and workstations
- Adhere to SLAs for recovering data – even as the business demands it faster
- Evolve without adding complexity as new applications are added and virtualization penetration increases
- Leverage integrated and intelligent archiving to reduce costs for information retention
- Meet compliance and eDiscovery needs
- Enable knowledge of the data and information in your environment
- Provide value to the business by enhancing access in order to get more value from your data
- Accomplish your information governance strategy

If you are not able to accomplish all these things with your current backup solution, without adding complexity or additional, loosely integrated point products, then there is reason to consider other alternatives.

### ▶ **THIRD QUESTION: EASILY ADAPTING TO FUTURE NEEDS**

**Q:** What ability to adapt to future needs is built into your current backup software solution?

Your environment is constantly evolving, but is your backup software solution adaptable enough to meet these changing needs, including the ones you don't know about yet? Is it built on a platform that enables easy integration of new technologies without the hassle of rip and replace upgrades? Will you be able to scale easily to meet your data growth demands? How quickly can your solution integrate with new applications and operating systems? Can you protect varying environments as they are added or change, from the data center to the edge, including end-point devices? It is imperative that you understand the innovation philosophy, the process for adding new features and what migrating to the next version of software looks like for the providers that you are considering. If you can't add the functionality you need, when you want it, affordably and easily, then you need to evaluate other options. Some specific considerations that you can evaluate against your unique demands are detailed in the following Table 1.

UPCOMING PROJECTS	INNOVATION	MANAGING COSTS	HARDWARE IMPACTS
What projects are planned in the next year that will impact your backup and recovery processes?	Are you positioned to reap the rewards of innovation in the backup and recovery space?	Are there different purchasing models, like a la carte and capacity-based, in case your management approach changes?	Do you have flexibility in hardware selection?
Could these projects exacerbate challenges you are currently facing with your current data protection solution?	How cost-effective and easy is it to take advantage of new technologies for data protection?	Do maintenance costs grow over time?	What is the impact to people, processes and resources when you outgrow your current hardware?
Could your backup solution introduce risk to the success or timeliness of these projects?	What is your existing backup software provider's approach to innovation – leader, follower or staying the course?	How easy is it to change your management approach and costs with different licensing models?	Is a painful and expensive hardware forklift upgrade something you've already experienced or see on the horizon?

TABLE 1: CONSIDERATIONS BY COMPANY

## ► FOURTH QUESTION: MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY

**Q:** How is your existing backup solution helping you to be drastically more efficient in managing data?

Your backup solution should make your life easier and not contribute to drains on personnel resources that distract you from the ability to deliver on strategic projects for the organization. It shouldn't require lots of manual processes and complex scripting. It should be easy to use so that lots of supplement training isn't continually required nor are long ramp times created –both of which strain personnel time and transitions. Can you easily offload tasks to end-users to enhance their productivity as well as that of your administration staff? Finally, it is imperative to understand the data and information you are protecting. Your solution should be able to easily provide insights into your environment to help you better manage it. With data expanding exponentially, recognizing potential trouble spots as well as opportunities to enhance efficiency are critical in order for you to have control of your environment.

Your backup solution should be able to provide detailed file level information so you can retire data at the appropriate time, saving storage space and maximizing the efficiency of your environment. Reporting and storage resource management, not only at the file level but also at the infrastructure level, should be integrated and able to give you intelligence about your whole environment – without having to add additional point solutions or require lots of time-consuming manual reporting processes.

You probably wish you could reduce the number of platforms and devices you manage, so you will also want to understand all of the pieces that make up your data protection and information management solution. This includes how well these components work together, what are the

resource demands for managing them now and what the transition process looks like for them when they reach the end of their usefulness. All of these critical considerations are essential to understand whether you will be able to change the game when it comes to efficiency in your organization, thereby reducing the resources and complexity required for day to day tasks and ultimately freeing them up to add value in other areas of your organization. If you feel like you aren't able to reduce the complexity and resources with your current solution, then it is time to evaluate other options.

## ▶ FIFTH QUESTION: FINANCIAL

**Q: What is the expected financial impact of maintaining your existing backup software solution for another three, or maybe even five years?**

In order to fully evaluate the various options available, you will be scrutinizing the financial impact of maintaining your current backup software solution for several years. In the past, the benefits of switching to a new solution haven't always been large enough to warrant it, but new developments in technology, approaches to the practice of backup and recovery and market options are changing this paradigm.

To fully understand whether this is now the case in your environment, you should have a clear picture of the total cost of ownership for the length of time you expect to continue to use your existing solution. For example, will you have to add hardware just to keep up – to account for performance deficiencies in processing and to handle storage growth and level deduplication? Will you have to dedicate more staff time to manual processes, scripting, reporting and trying to integrate various point solutions? Are you locked into hardware choices that prevent you from taking advantage of more cost-effective alternatives? Finally, what are the hidden costs? All of these elements should be considered in order to get a full picture of the cost of renewing your existing backup solution so that it can be compared to the alternatives that have made your short list by satisfying the other questions and factors discussed above.

## ▶ THE REAL RISKS - AND MITIGATIONS - OF SWITCHING

What if you aren't satisfied with the answers to all the questions above from your current backup software provider? You may now be considering switching solutions to something different, but this brings its own set of considerations and unknowns. It is natural to be wary of what this might entail in terms of financial and operational impact to your organization and the potential risk for data loss. Maybe you have first-hand knowledge


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of a past migration to a new platform that didn't go as planned or put your organization's data at risk. Before taking this step it is important to understand what the real risks – and mitigations – of switching are.

Can alternative backup software solution providers satisfactorily provide answers to these questions in order to alleviate your concerns around the process of switching?

- How much time will it take to be fully operational with the new solution?
- How much of your staff's time will be required to make the change?
- How do they ensure that data is protected and accessible in the transition process?
- What is their plan for adjustments should things not work exactly as described?
- And of course, what is the full picture of costs that make up the solution, including new hardware, software, training and personnel?

In regards to the last consideration, you may find that a new solution could actually allow you to redeploy resources currently used as part of your existing backup software solution to other areas, reducing the overall cost versus maintaining the status quo thanks to innovations inherent in modern data protection practices.

## ► **COMMVault® – A MODERN DATA PROTECTION ALTERNATIVE**

As you weigh your options during this important decision-making process to see if it is indeed the time to change from your existing backup software solution provider, you will no doubt discover that Commvault is equipped to deliver an efficient, optimized, adaptable, innovative and cost-effective option and is committed to partnering with you in meeting the challenges of enterprise backup and recovery in this era of rapidly evolving data and information management to enable you to:

- Reduce storage and storage management costs up to 50% by leveraging your existing investments more efficiently, delaying costly storage and network upgrades, and enabling additional storage options, such as more cost-effective DAS, SAN and NAS disk tiers, tape, cloud and object-based storage to meet your needs
- Simplify the complex by eliminating manual scripting and processes; automating tasks that discover, deploy, and protect within your environment; and leveraging policy-based data protection and management
- Manage data protection, recovery, and placement in heterogeneous hardware and heavily virtualized environments easily through application and storage-aware snapshots and persistent, global cataloguing across storage tiers
- Speed and scale protection and recovery through the use of snapshots, global, embedded deduplication, and efficient cataloguing
- Protect the entire environment from edge to core with a single solution
- Know and understand the data and information being protected and be able to manage it based on business needs



- Ensure data is protected and managed in the best possible way to meet your corporate, regulatory, and governance requirements as a result of integrated archive, e-discovery, and data protection options in one solution that can seamlessly cover distributed client systems, remote/branch offices, and the central data center
- Rely on automated alerts, security, standard and customized search options, as well as easy-to-use storage resource management reporting to make your dynamic environment more understandable and your data and information more manageable

Commvault software eliminates the frustrations caused by poorly integrated point products used for data management. Instead it provides the benefits of a modern data management solution built on a single platform that enables you to analyze, replicate, protect, archive, and search data effectively and efficiently from any storage tier, ultimately helping you to lower costs, reduce risk of loss and remove complexity. Before renewing your current backup solution compare how Commvault's answers to these questions stack up – we think you will be pleasantly surprised by what you find.

▶ To learn more about Commvault software, and how it will enable your modern data protection strategy, please visit [commvault.com](http://commvault.com).

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