

Finding the Right Fit: How Veeam Availability Solution Complemented the Core Values of Industry-Leading Mining Company



"With Veeam, the time we've saved by not having to manage and maintain backups manually has been massive. It's simple to manage and can scale to meet our future needs, gives us a peace of mind that our data is always available to keep our operations running smoothly"

— Erle Metcalf,
ICT Coordinator,
Consolidated Minerals Pty Ltd

The Business Challenge

As a mining company, Consolidated Minerals' (ConsMin) top priorities are production and supply chain management, so keeping its enterprise resource planning (ERP) operations running smoothly online is crucial. Data is time sensitive, and any unavailability will slow down the processes.

At one point, it was in productive operation when mining operations were placed into care and maintenance. This presented an opportunity to streamline the administration and IT functions.

Erle Metcalf, Consolidated Minerals' ICT Coordinator, explains that the office, lights and previous IT building remained operational in anticipation of production recommencing. When it did, there were some significant bills for software, license and equipment renewals. This prompted a thorough systems audit, and among the discoveries was a very expensive and cumbersome data availability solution.

If the system goes down, the process of recording ore as it is extracted slows, according to Metcalf. "The block models don't get transferred to our diggers in an appropriate amount of time," he says. "The impact is they have to go back to their manual process, which means someone going out to the diggers every hour to make a record, and re-enter it back into their system once it is back operational. It impacts the time it takes to keep the ore moving."

Industry

Mining

Company



Based out of Perth and one of the highest grade manganese ore producers in the world, Consolidated Minerals Pty Limited (ConsMin) employs more than 400 people across two locations.

The other reason to look elsewhere for disaster recovery (DR) was that integration with incoming systems was set to be a labyrinthine process with other providers.

"We recently put in a FlashStack (a converged infrastructure solution using Cisco and Pure Storage), with everything due to move across to Microsoft Office 365, and the legacy backup solution wasn't capable of doing what we needed," Metcalf says. "We went to market with the specific requirement of Office 365 cloud presence and backup, as a lot of people don't think about backing their email up."

The Veeam Solution

In face of the legacy availability solution's shortfalls, Consolidated Minerals went back to market to find something easier to maintain and manage, and that was when Veeam came into the picture.

Veeam Availability Suite was deployed on its Cisco UCS C240 and it has bought about a new paradigm of data availability to Metcalf and his team. Under the old IT regime, ConsMin did not have accurate data coming in to the system, with information about frontline operations often coming in manually and having to be reconciled. Today, Veeam offers a complete view of ConsMin's data, and security that the legacy system could not provide.

Any new solution adopted by Consolidated Minerals had to adhere to the three-core values Metcalf says he maintains, not just with his IT team but in his career; namely simplicity, scalability and least administrative effort. It was these benchmarks he says the previous system did not meet because it was much more complicated than it needed to be.

"We were looking for a system that could scale with our growth rapidly," Metcalf says. "One of the primary reasons we went with Veeam was because it was a lot simpler than other vendors. For example, the back-up system is managed by my team member, but just the other day I logged into the Veeam platform and restored some old files from it by myself – it was that easy."

Metcalf contrasts that to the previous system, where it could take one or two days' worth of man-hours to sort backups out – whether it was making sure data was transferred successfully to the data centre, changing backup tapes or guarding against or fixing failures.

The move to Veeam has also resulted in considerable cost savings. For one thing, ConsMin is no longer outlaying up to \$300 per month on data tapes, to say nothing of the expense and time involved in transporting and cycling them (which Metcalf says represents the biggest cost saving).

Back payments on old maintenance and support tickets totalled more than the outlay to deploy Veeam altogether, and the bill to renew the previous system was around three times Veeam's cost as well. What's more, renewing the old system did not include the provision for critical software integration Metcalf was looking for in Office 365.

Challenge

Ninety-five percent of ConsMin's environment is virtualised, with most of their data held in SQL databases and an enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution from provider Pronto. Back-ups are managed by an on-site data centre and an off-site data store using private and public cloud providers and data tape. ConsMin's challenge has been to find a provider that can bring all their data together in a data availability environment that is flexible, integration-focused and secure.

Solution

Veeam Availability Suite + FlashStack
(Cisco UCS C240 + Pure Storage)

Results

- Meets IT team's requirement for data availability
- Time savings and peace of mind
- Cost savings of 66%

He says it has been painless, not only using Veeam, but moving to subsequent builds and upgrades has also been fast and easy too as it does not interrupt the flow of incoming data from mining operations.

Happily, there have been no data loss horror stories so far since using Veeam, and Metcalf adds that his team has moved from a constant stance of care and maintenance, to one of organisation and advancement.

Integration with other products and systems was a key driver for ConsMins' selecting Veeam as its DR and data availability partner. One of their next projects is to plan and deploy full featured cloud backup, and Office 365 integration was the primary requirement. Metcalf says the entire restructure of the company's data availability profile was built around it.

So far, Metcalf says the whole experience of deploying and using Veeam boils down to confidence. "I know I can have anyone go into the Veeam dashboard and recover a file if they need to, all the way up to the server level. The time saved in not having to manage and maintain back-ups manually has been massive."

The Results

- **Meets IT team's requirement for data availability**

Metcalf strives to achieve three goals in the company's availability solution; simplicity, scalability and minimal administrative effort, and he says Veeam ticks every box, keeping data available to ensure minimal disruption to the ERP process.

- **Time savings and peace of mind**

Veeam now sends daily notifications on success or potential issues, giving the IT team a peace of mind. It only takes one IT staff and a few hours each week to check on the backups. The 80% of staff time spent on maintenance can now be deployed to more strategic initiatives.

- **Cost savings of 66%**

On top of maintenance costs dating from old support tickets with the previous provider, the renewal price of the prior solution amounted to AUD36,000. The Veeam deployment cost less than a third as much.

About Veeam Software

Veeam is the global leader in *Intelligent Data Management for the Hyper-Available Enterprise*. Veeam Hyper-Availability Platform is the most complete solution to help customers on the journey to automating data management and ensuring the Hyper-Availability of data.



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