

Addressing the risks of data loss

By [Claude Schuck](#)

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Every organisation understands the value of having always-on access to its mission-critical data. In fact, data has become the currency driving the digital business landscape, without which, an enterprise loses its relevancy. But how does a decision-maker address concerns around the impact of data loss?



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Results of the [2017 Veeam Availability Report](#) reflect this dynamic new data-driven market, finding that 77% of enterprises are seeing the emergence of a protection gap.



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This is an organisation's tolerance for lost data being exceeded by IT's inability to protect that data frequently enough.

“Enterprises' expectations for uptime are consistently being unmet due to insufficient protection mechanisms and policies.”

The findings show that although companies state that they can only tolerate 72 minutes per year of data loss within 'high priority' applications, respondents experience 127 minutes of data loss, a discrepancy of nearly one hour. This poses a major risk for all companies and impacts business success in many ways.

The cost of data

From a financial perspective, downtime costs businesses an average of R270m per year which not only negatively impacts normal operations but so stifles innovation. Veeam's Availability Report goes on to state that 66% of enterprises admit that digital transformation initiatives are being held back by unplanned downtime.



Claude Schuck

And with a 36% annual increase in terms of incidents, the problem is only getting worse. Decision-makers therefore need to assess their readiness and preparedness for what will happen when data loss incurs inside the organisation. Like cyber-attacks, it seems that it is not a question of whether disaster will strike but accepting that the organisation will experience loss either in terms of data or in terms of access at one time or another.

Its business continuity and disaster recovery strategies are therefore mission-critical to ensuring that the business continues to operate, data access notwithstanding. This puts the onus on executives to make sure there is a link between what needs to be done operationally as well as technically. Both components are essential and need to feed into the broader enterprise strategy.

Mind the gap

But being aware of the protection gap is only one component. The realisation of its importance need to go together with an honest assessment of existing data access and protection processes. Framing this narrative is how data backup solutions fulfil compliancy requirements.

Aligning with legal parameters across data policies inside the enterprise must be intertwined with the actual solutions being implemented. Only once this is done can the decision-maker look at how data availability can bring impetus to business strategy and competitive advantage.

This also means the enterprise can go full circle and not only understand the potential cost of data loss but also identify the ways needed to protect it from suffering irreparable damage.

“ *It is about creating an enabling environment for the always-on business to drive the digital transformation advantage.* ”

With data being a fundamental component of doing business in the digital age, organisations can ill afford not to have always-on access to it. It now becomes a case of investigating the cost of ensuring this is done versus the financial and reputational impact of not doing so. The continuing success of the business is at stake.

ABOUT CLAUDE SCHUCK

Claude Schuck is the regional manager for Africa at Veeam.

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