VERITAS™

Protecting Business-Critical Microsoft 365 Data

Challenge

Qatar Engineering & Construction Company (Qcon) was moving business-critical communication and collaboration workloads from an on-premises environment into Microsoft 365. During the due diligence process, the IT team realized that Microsoft 365 does not provide the data protection capabilities that Qcon needs to protect email, Teams, OneDrive, and SharePoint data.

Solution

After evaluating a range of options, Qcon selected Veritas Alta™ SaaS Protection (formerly known as NetBackup SaaS Protection) for backup and recovery of the new Microsoft 365 environment. Key features that made Veritas Alta SaaS Protection the best fit include the flexibility of its data restore process and support for ransomware recovery..

Outcome

Now, Qcon has reliable, high-performance backup and recovery for its Microsoft 365 data. The IT team can perform granular restores of individual emails or files, group restores of all emails or files that meet specific criteria, or bulk restores of entire mailboxes. Data recovery is fast to complete and efficient to manage, with a low total cost of ownership (TCO) compared with the alternatives.

QCon

INDUSTRY

Construction

EMPLOYEES

5,000+

HEADQUARTERS

Ras Laffan Industrial City (RLIC), Qatar

WEBSITE

qcon.com.qa

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> *After Veritas Alta SaaS Protection writes the backups, they cannot be changed. We consider the backup and protection of our data to be one of our most important lines of defense [against] a ransomware attack— we are confident that our data is safe with Veritas"*
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> Nizar Radad, Head of IT, Qatar Engineering & Construction Company
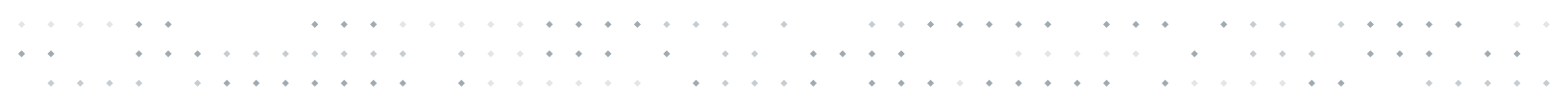
A Dynamic Business Requires Dynamic App Sizing

Qatar Engineering & Construction Company (Qcon) is the leading national engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) and maintenance contractor in the oil-and-gas, petrochemical, fertilizer, and power industries. "Qcon has played a key role in developing Qatar's hydrocarbon infrastructure," says Nizar Radad, head of the company's IT department.

Qcon takes on both long-term construction projects and short-term jobs that generally entail maintenance on existing pipelines or factories. Radad says these short-term projects are also called "shutdowns" because Qcon's clients, which are major global energy producers, must fully shut down certain sections of their infrastructure for a month or two.

"These jobs require a huge amount of manpower, but only for a few months," Radad says. "We recruit temporary workers on a regular basis from abroad for short-term projects who return to their home countries after that period." Qcon employs around 5,000 full-time, skilled staff members and brings in another 5,000 temporary workers during peak periods.

Majority of Qcon staff communicate and share information through Microsoft 365 solutions, including Outlook, Teams, and OneDrive. "By using Microsoft 365, we reduce the load on our on- premises hardware," Radad says. "So now, when we do a big refresh of our data center, we can install a smaller volume of new storage. Another benefit of Microsoft 365 is that the mailboxes are much larger than in our old on-premise Exchange environment, so users do not have to archive emails as often."

Perhaps most important, considering Qcon's dramatic swings in staffing, is the agility of a cloud-based solution. "We have an annual subscription license, but it gives us flexibility so that if one user leaves, we can reassign his license to someone else," Radad says. "And if our workforce is growing or shrinking significantly, we can convert Microsoft 365 to a monthly or quarterly license and change the number of users."

Microsoft 365 Data Needs Protection

When Qcon began planning the transition to Microsoft 365, the company's IT decision-makers realized that the cloud collaboration platform does not provide the data protection and long-term archiving capabilities they need. "We thought Microsoft 365 would take care of our data in the event of a disaster or deletion," Radad explains. "However, as I investigated this belief, I discovered that there were no native features within Microsoft 365 to meet our requirements."

Chief among those needs was reliable data recovery in the event of a ransomware attack. "Ransomware is currently the nightmare for all IT leaders," Radad says. Because Qatar is hosting the 2022 World Cup, businesses there are worried that their newly raised profile will attract even more attention from bad actors. "The logs of our security systems demonstrate that we are facing all kinds of attacks right now," he adds. "We believe the World Cup would increase the frequency of ransomware attacks we might face."

To protect Qcon, Radad and his team have implemented a number of new technologies. He sees data protection as a crucial component of the company's security landscape, since recovery from a ransomware attack might require Qcon to restore emails and other files from long-term backups. "As we intend to store backups of our key files for several years as minimum, the data storage available within Microsoft 365 was insufficient," he explains.

Radad's team considered using on-premises storage for long-term backup retention, but that approach would have been prohibitively costly. Maintenance also would have been "a real headache," he says.

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> **Nizar Radad,** Head of IT, Qatar Engineering & Construction Company

Flexible, Fast Data Recovery for an Unlimited Period of Time

Instead, Qcon turned to Veritas Alta SaaS Protection, a cloud-native solution that provides backup and recovery capabilities for the full range of data stored across Microsoft 365, from mailboxes and Teams to OneDrive and SharePoint. Veritas Alta SaaS Protection offers unlimited backup storage for an unlimited period.

The solution's seamless integration with the Microsoft 365 application programming interface (API) makes it easy for organizations to maintain a full backup of all their Microsoft 365 data. In the event of a ransomware attack, data deletion, or other incident, Veritas Alta SaaS Protection can restore data in bulk or at a granular level and can provide that data to either the original location or an alternative site.

"We can restore an email within a PST file or send it directly to the inbox of a specific user," Radad says. "And we can restore individual emails, all emails in a date range for particular users, or all emails that meet some other criteria. There are a lot of different parameters we can use to find backups of specific files or emails from our Microsoft 365 environment. The flexibility and ad hoc search capability are the best features of the solution, in my opinion."

He adds that Veritas Alta SaaS Protection has exceeded his expectations in terms of performance, as well. Qcon's IT team runs tests on the data protection environment, in addition to frequent real-world requests for data recovery.

"I use Veritas Alta SaaS Protection to perform restores about once a week, for a lot of different scenarios," he continues. "I am always impressed with the quality and speed of response in Veritas Alta SaaS Protection."

Simultaneous Boosts to Security and Efficiency

Another important benefit, according to Radad, is that "Veritas Alta SaaS Protection is more secure." Data resides in a dedicated, SOC 2–compliant instance of the Veritas data management platform, situated within Microsoft Azure. Veritas Alta SaaS Protection uses end-to-end encryption to lock down access to the data.

"After Veritas Alta SaaS Protection writes the backups, they cannot be changed," Radad adds. "We have not been subjected to ransomware attacks before, but we consider that the backup and protection of our data is one of our most important lines of defense. If we were to suffer a ransomware attack, we would be able to retrieve our data—we are confident that our data is safe with Veritas."

Even as Veritas Alta SaaS Protection has strengthened Qcon's ability to recover from a ransomware attack, it has also introduced significant efficiency improvements. "Our IT team is short-staffed," Radad says. "As we shopped for a data protection solution, we needed to make sure it would not only provide the right features, but also require very little time for our staff to maintain and manage." Veritas Alta SaaS Protection fits Qcon's data protection sweet spot. "It is easier to use than most of the products we considered. We evaluated some other SaaS solutions that were also easy to use, but they didn't have the same accuracy and capabilities."

Veritas Alta SaaS Protection is also excelling in terms of total cost of ownership (TCO). "There is no cost beyond the per-user licensing," Radad says. "With other solutions, we would have had to factor in the cost of storage as well."

The Perfect Solution for Protecting Qcon's Cloud Data

All in all, Radad concludes, "Veritas Alta SaaS Protection is working perfectly, and it meets all our needs. Our email volume is very large, and being able to retrieve files is business critical. As a major EPIC contractor, we have a lot of emails with a lot of attachments—everything from contracts to blueprints to claims with clients or partners. Missing emails might literally cost us money. With Veritas Alta SaaS Protection, we have dramatically reduced that risk."

Later this year, Qcon will shift its SharePoint environment to Microsoft 365. "This is a very critical application for our organization, and we will use Veritas Alta SaaS Protection to protect our SharePoint data," Radad says. "As we migrate more and more workloads to the cloud, Veritas will be our first choice for protecting that information. I hope to continue and expand this relationship into the future."

For More Information

Please contact your local Veritas Sales Representative or Business Partner, or visit Veritas Alta SaaS Protection

About Veritas

Veritas Technologies is a leader in multi-cloud data management. Over 80,000 customers—including 95 percent of the Fortune 100—rely on Veritas to help ensure the protection, recoverability, and compliance of their data. Veritas has a reputation for reliability at scale, which delivers the resilience its customers need against the disruptions threatened by cyberattacks, like ransomware. No other vendor is able to match the ability of Veritas to execute, with support for 800+ data sources, 100+ operating systems, 1,400+ storage targets, and 60+ clouds through a single, unified approach. Powered by Cloud Scale Technology, Veritas is delivering today on its strategy for Autonomous Data Management that reduces operational overhead while delivering greater value. Learn more at www.veritas.com. Follow us on Twitter at @veritastechllc.

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