Five Common Data Protection Problems: How Leading MSPs Solved Them
Data protection may seem like a solved problem, but recurring issues often crop up around backup and recovery, even if you think you have it covered. Read on to see how five award-winning managed IT services providers solved them.

**PROBLEM 1: THE BACKUP SOLUTION I USE NOW IS TOO EXPENSIVE FOR MY PRICE-CONSCIOUS CUSTOMERS**

Chris Soutar, vice president of managed services at Entré Computer Solutions in Machesney Park, Illinois, used a competing enterprise backup software product for years. However, as their business grew, he found that smaller customers had trouble absorbing the upfront costs of a backup appliance. This prompted Chris to look at other alternatives for his most cost-conscious customers.

“Initially, we chose SolarWinds® Backup because the month-to-month billing, with no upfront appliance or perpetual license purchase, was appealing,” he said. “As we used the product, however, we were also impressed by how well it handles tasks like protecting full server images, and by the quality of customer support we received from SolarWinds MSP.”

Today, SolarWinds Backup is the engine behind Entré’s private-label data protection service, protecting more than 100 TB of data. They are in the process of moving all customers from the previous solution over to SolarWinds Backup.

“It’s easy to use, and has become our lead product,” Chris continued. “Our engineers are very comfortable with SolarWinds [Backup], and where our customers have in-house IT teams, they’ve found it straightforward as well.”

**PROBLEM 2: I DON’T HAVE TIME TO MAKE EVERYONE ON MY TEAM A BACKUP EXPERT**

Orr Systems is a managed IT services provider based in Alaska that has grown from a time-based consulting business to offering contract-based proactive managed services. Improving the productivity of their technical team was a big part of that transition, and backup was one area they focused on to boost efficiency.

“Originally, we just worked with whatever backup the client had when they came to us, but that meant we had to spend a lot of time on backup-related issues,” said Kyle Orr, network engineer for Orr Systems. “SolarWinds Backup is much simpler to manage, and gave us that time back. For example, we wrote a script to deploy Backup to a new server with the settings we want, so now when we get a new client, we have backups running in just a couple of minutes.”
The real test of the simplicity of SolarWinds Backup came when a large client with a critical SQL Server database needed a live restore from a specific point in time into a Microsoft® Hyper-V® virtual machine, from which they wanted to import into their production environment. The available technician at Orr had never worked with SolarWinds Backup before, and was not a database expert, yet he was able to do it smoothly on the first try.

Since distances between towns and offices are large in Alaska, Orr also needed a product that could send backups over the WAN quickly by minimizing the amount of data sent.

“It’s crazy how little data is sent in daily backups using SolarWinds [Backup],” Kyle said. “We’re backing up GBs of data, yet by using the LocalSpeedVault and True Delta, we’re only transferring a couple of hundred MBs. Backups that used to take eight hours are now complete in ten minutes.”

**PROBLEM 3: MY CUSTOMERS EXPECT ME TO RECOVER THEIR LOST DOCUMENTS, BUT DON’T WANT TO PAY FOR FULL WORKSTATION BACKUP**

PCnet, based in Wichita Falls, Texas, has been a dynamic force in selling, servicing, and networking of PCs and printers since 1995. They have assembled a talented and diversified group of sales and technical staff to meet their customers’ varying needs. PCnet serves a wide variety of customers, covering businesses, education, and city government, managing everything that connects to a network. They use SolarWinds RMM, Mail Assure, and Backup to help them meet customer needs effectively and efficiently.

“With SolarWinds MSP, we have everything we need in one place. We have alerts and remediations set up to happen automatically, and all our techs use it every day,” said Bryan Gibson, vice president and lead network engineer at PCnet. Over the years, he’s seen and worked with many backup products, and fully realizes the importance of being able to recover customer data when and where it is needed. Unfortunately, budget-restricted customers often don’t have the same realization.

“Our preference is to fully protect customers’ servers and workstations, and we appreciate the speed of SolarWinds Backup in doing that,” Gibson added. “But a few small customers resist any investment in data protection, so I make it a matter of policy to always provide at least SolarWinds Backup Documents protection in the background. It’s affordable enough I can roll it into the basic cost of our service, and I sleep better knowing that even those resistant customers’ critical business documents can be recovered if needed.”

“Restores and backups with SolarWinds are fast. For example, we see system state backups of application servers in two minutes, files and folders in a couple of minutes. So little data is being transferred that it’s not really using any bandwidth at all.”

— Bryan Gibson, PCnet
PROBLEM 4: WE NEED TO BE ABLE TO SCALE AS WE GROW, AND THAT REQUIRES EFFICIENCY

Rampart Hosting provides a spectrum of IT offerings to its clients, including managed IT services, cybersecurity, data center and cloud solutions, web/app development, technology consulting, and more. From their base in Columbus, Ohio, Rampart serves customers nationwide. As their services and reach expanded, they were unhappy with the responsiveness of their remote monitoring and management and backup products, and found SolarWinds Backup to be a better solution.

“Our business model is mature,” said Don Ribar, CFO and co-owner of Rampart Hosting. “We sell managed services; we’re not a software reseller. Our customers know that we’ll keep things running smoothly, and they don’t have to worry about what tools we use in the background to do it.” That’s why Rampart chooses its vendor partners carefully, and adds automation everywhere it makes sense.

Rampart appreciates SolarWinds MSP products because of their ease of management, flexibility, and flat-rate pricing, but the real value comes into play when a customer needs recovery. “We had a client get hit with ransomware before they worked with us, and it took them several days to recover,” Ribar said. “It was difficult, complicated, and took too long. Now we have them in a good situation, where future recoveries will be much faster and simpler.”

Howard Hoover, Rampart’s Managed Services Specialist, was part of the team that selected SolarWinds Backup. Because there is no proprietary appliance, and backups go directly to the SolarWinds private cloud and optionally also to a local drive. Because of this, he found upfront costs to be lower than competing solutions, and backups to run fast enough to easily fit within customers’ backup windows. “We’re now able to offer much better backup, at a cost our customers can afford,” Hoover said. “The restore process is simple enough that some of our clients can do their own restores, which saves us time and gives them the fastest possible response. It’s more efficient for everyone.”

“With SolarWinds, customers on a budget can have solid backup, with bare-metal restore and off-site protection, for an affordable price.”

— Howard Hoover, Rampart Hosting
**PROBLEM 5: MY CLIENTS NEED TO MEET REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS AROUND DATA RETENTION AND RECOVERABILITY**

**Vision Municipal Solutions**, in Spokane, Washington, specializes in IT products and services for local government entities. Other clients include real estate, law, and healthcare organizations, but the focus is on helping government agencies in cities with populations under 15,000. Vision runs a lean operation, with just four technicians managing nearly 1,300 nodes, more than 200 servers, and 1,100 workstations located across four states.

“Our customers live in a highly regulated world, and when it comes to data protection, our answer is to simply add it to every contract,” explained Brandon Votaw, Director of IT Services for Vision. Unlike many managed services providers, Vision typically works on full-year contracts aligned with governmental agency budget cycles. Each year, they mature the services and protections offered to their clients as part of the contract cycle.

“We didn’t make it optional or get into a big discussion,” Votaw added. “We simply added it to every standard contract as a line item, and received virtually no pushback because our customers know they have archiving and retention regulations to meet. We did the same thing the prior year with antivirus. Every year, we take a big step forward in the coverage our customers enjoy.”

Given their small staff, having SolarWinds Backup integrated with SolarWinds RMM saves them time. When they needed to recover something, the process has gone smoothly. “We passed the HIPAA accreditation at a large medical facility based on the strength of our systems and processes,” Votaw said.

“We build our servers to be recoverable, because we know that if we don’t, we’ll pay for it down the road,” Votaw added. Workstation backup with SolarWinds Backup is a requirement of doing business with Vision. A few clients with lighter weight requirements and more limited budgets are covered by SolarWinds Backup Documents, which Vision found easy to deploy.

Vision Municipal Solutions has a data protection service they know works and will meet their clients’ goals. Integration and automation help them reduce administrative overhead, allowing a small staff to fully support a large and geographically dispersed customer base. Remote backup and management with SolarWinds MSP is one key to their success.
SolarWinds is a leading provider of powerful and affordable IT infrastructure management software. Our products give organizations worldwide, regardless of type, size, or IT infrastructure complexity, the power to monitor and manage the performance of their IT environments, whether on-premises, in the cloud, or in hybrid models. We continuously engage with all types of technology professionals—IT operations professionals, DevOps professionals, and managed service providers (MSPs)—to understand the challenges they face maintaining high-performing and highly available IT infrastructures. Targeted for MSPs, the SolarWinds MSP product portfolio delivers broad, scalable IT service management solutions that integrate layered security, collective intelligence, and smart automation. Our products are designed to enable MSPs to provide highly effective outsourced IT services for their SMB end customers and more efficiently manage their own businesses.

To learn more about SolarWinds Backup, or to begin a free trial, visit: https://www.solarwindsmsp.com/products/backup