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Delivering Agile Data Protection for Microsoft 365 with Veeam Backup for Microsoft 365

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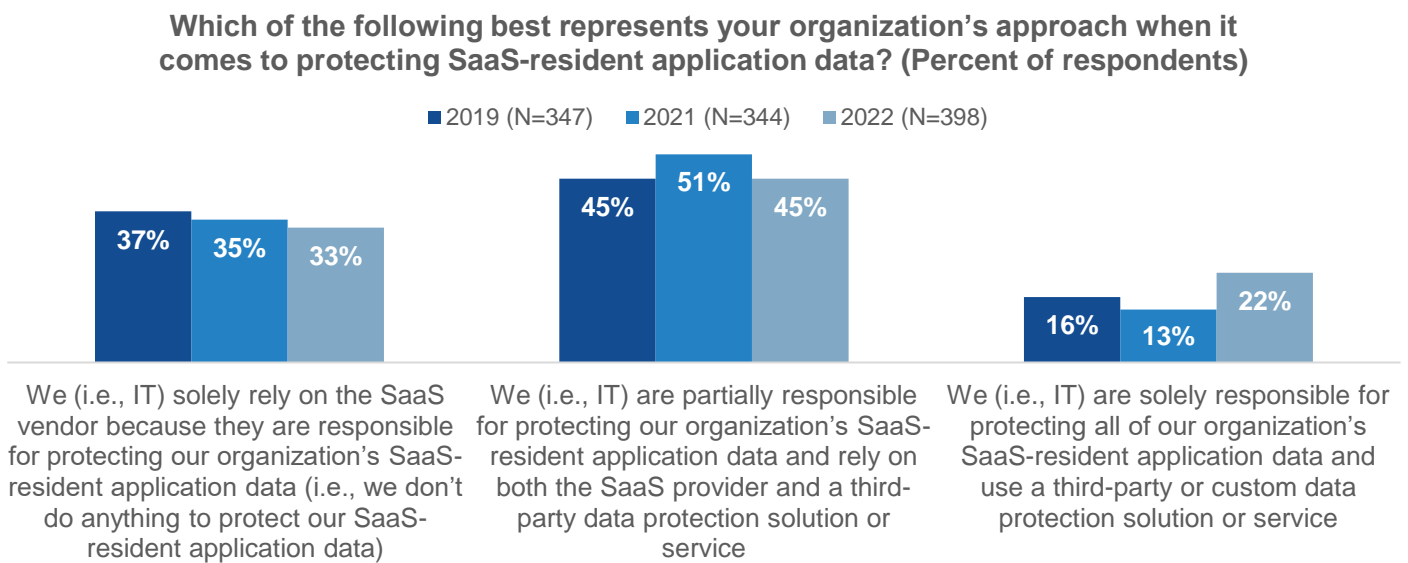
Abstract

This Technical Review from TechTarget's Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) documents the results of a detailed evaluation of Veeam Backup for Microsoft 365, including validating granular backup management capabilities and agile recovery options.

The Challenges

For the right application, organizations can realize a lot of benefits by migrating it to the cloud. For instance, they can transfer the responsibility of elements such as physical data center, hosts, network, operating system, and application, to their SaaS providers. However, for the majority of (if not all) SaaS applications, it is still the responsibility of the organizations to manage and protect the data they put into the application. Unfortunately, in 2022, TechTarget's Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) research found that only 22% of respondents still believed that protecting the data in their SaaS applications was their responsibility (see Figure 1). Additionally, ESG research also shows that SaaS is not immune to data loss. In fact, 53% of respondents reported SaaS data loss or corruption over a 12-month period.[1]

Figure 1. The SaaS Backup Disconnect Persists

Which of the following best represents your organization's approach when it comes to protecting SaaS-resident application data? (Percent of respondents)

■ 2019 (N=347) ■ 2021 (N=344) ■ 2022 (N=398)

We (i.e., IT) solely rely on the SaaS vendor because they are responsible for protecting our organization's SaaS-resident application data (i.e., we don't do anything to protect our SaaS-resident application data)

- 2019: 37%
- 2021: 35%
- 2022: 33%

We (i.e., IT) are partially responsible for protecting our organization's SaaS-resident application data and rely on both the SaaS provider and a third-party data protection solution or service

- 2019: 45%
- 2021: 51%
- 2022: 45%

We (i.e., IT) are solely responsible for protecting all of our organization's SaaS-resident application data and use a third-party or custom data protection solution or service

- 2019: 16%
- 2021: 13%
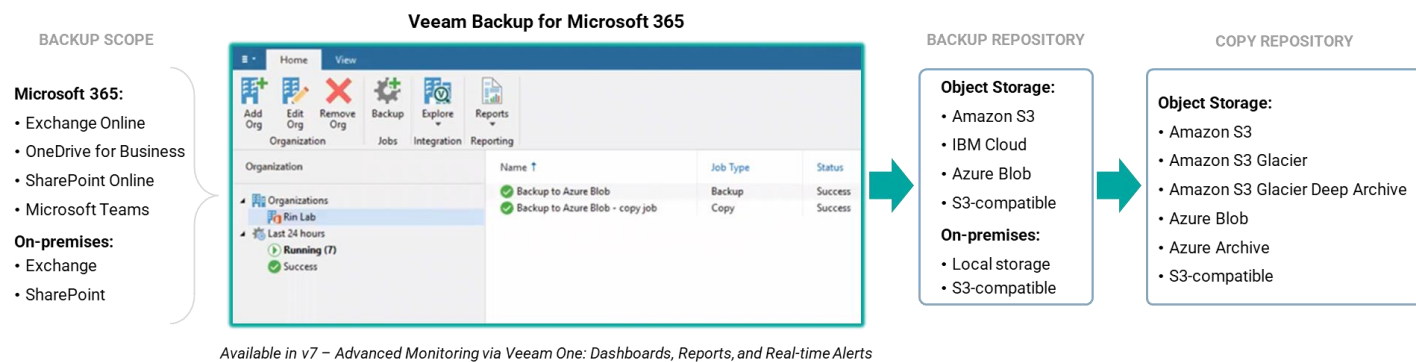- 2022: 22%

Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

[1] Source: Enterprise Strategy Group Complete Survey Results, *SaaS Data Protection: A Work in Progress*, November 2022.

The Solution: Veeam Backup for Microsoft 365

Veeam Backup for Microsoft 365 is a data protection application designed to protect Microsoft 365 data and on-premises data for Exchange and SharePoint from accidental deletion, security threats, and retention policy gaps. As shown in Figure 2, Veeam Backup for Microsoft 365 gives organizations the power to securely backup Microsoft 365 to any location (on-premises or in cloud object storage), including Amazon S3, Azure Blob, IBM Cloud, or S3-compatible providers on-premises. The application is quick and easy to install on any Windows machine and can be found for download on the AWS and Azure marketplaces, as well as the Veeam website.

Figure 2. Solution Overview

Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Veeam Backup for Microsoft 365 also enables quick restore of individual Microsoft 365 items and files with recovery flexibility. As shown in Figure 3, the granular management capabilities also give administrators the data freedom they need to match Microsoft 365 protection to their business recovery requirements. The ease of use of the solution makes it easy to define and implement data protection jobs.

Figure 3. Granular Management Capabilities
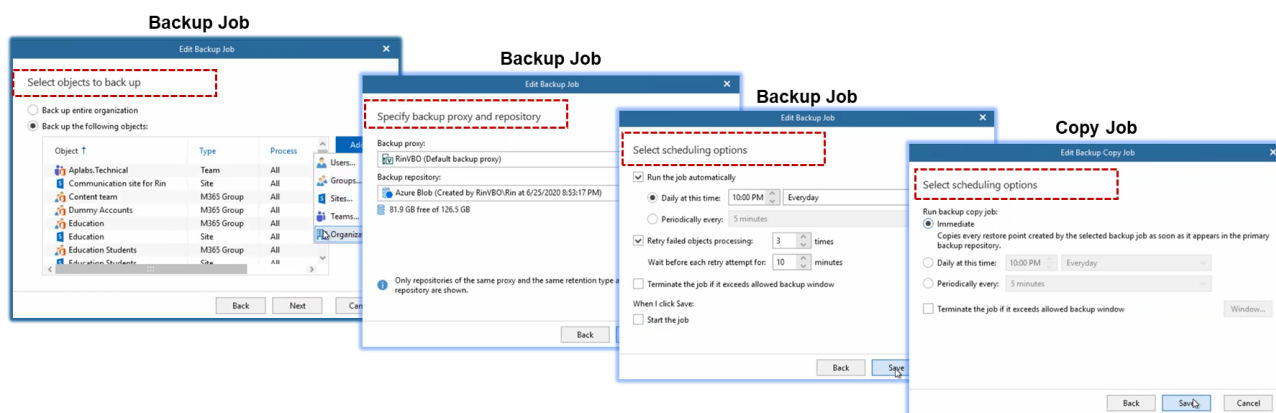
Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

For example, key management features include the ability via a backup job configuration wizard to easily select the Microsoft 365 elements that organizations want to protect, the granularity to specify the backup proxy and repository where they want to store their backup data, and the flexibility through the scheduler to select the time and frequency for which they want the backup job to run. Also, as shown on the far-right side of figure 3, we see the ability to select when a copy job should run for a specified backup job. In this case, we told the copy job to run immediately after the backup job completes, a feature that we expect many administrators to leverage.

While this report focused on Veeam Backup for Microsoft 365 Version 6, Version 7 is now available, with a number of enhancements that are important to note here. Version 7 lets organizations make backup copies immutable on any object storage to protect them from ransomware attacks and further ensure recovery integrity and confidence. V7 integrates with Veeam ONE Version 12 to provide advanced monitoring and reporting. This integration enables proactive monitoring of Microsoft 365 backup and storage resources, alerts to help organizations resolve issues quickly, and SLA reports to ensure recovery point objectives (RPOs) can be met and organizations can satisfy compliance requirements.

Enterprise Strategy Group Validated

In the previous solution section of this report, Enterprise Strategy Group reviewed the extensive capabilities of Veeam Backup for Microsoft 365 data management capabilities. In the following section, we will explore the flexibility or "data freedom" attributes a data protection administrator needs to deliver efficient and successful recovery.

Agile Data Recovery for Microsoft 365

Enterprise Strategy Group started its evaluation of the Veeam solution by exploring its granular recovery feature for Exchange. Exchange is an industry-leading mail and calendaring server developed by Microsoft that can be deployed on-premises or delivered as a server through Microsoft 365. As shown in figure 4, we used Veeam Explorer for Microsoft Exchange to review the capabilities of the solution. It should be noted that each of the Veeam Explorer modules covered in this paper include advanced search and the ability to compare a "recover point" with the current production environment. These types of features are critical for quick recovery, *especially at scale*. As shown in Figure 4, we navigated to a user inbox, selected a mail message to restore, and chose the "Send to" option from the comprehensive recovery options list. It should also be highlighted that, in addition to the UI shown in figure 4, there is a browser-based explorer specifically designed for restore that can be leveraged for tasks such as self-service recoveries.

Figure 4. Veeam Explorer for Microsoft Exchange
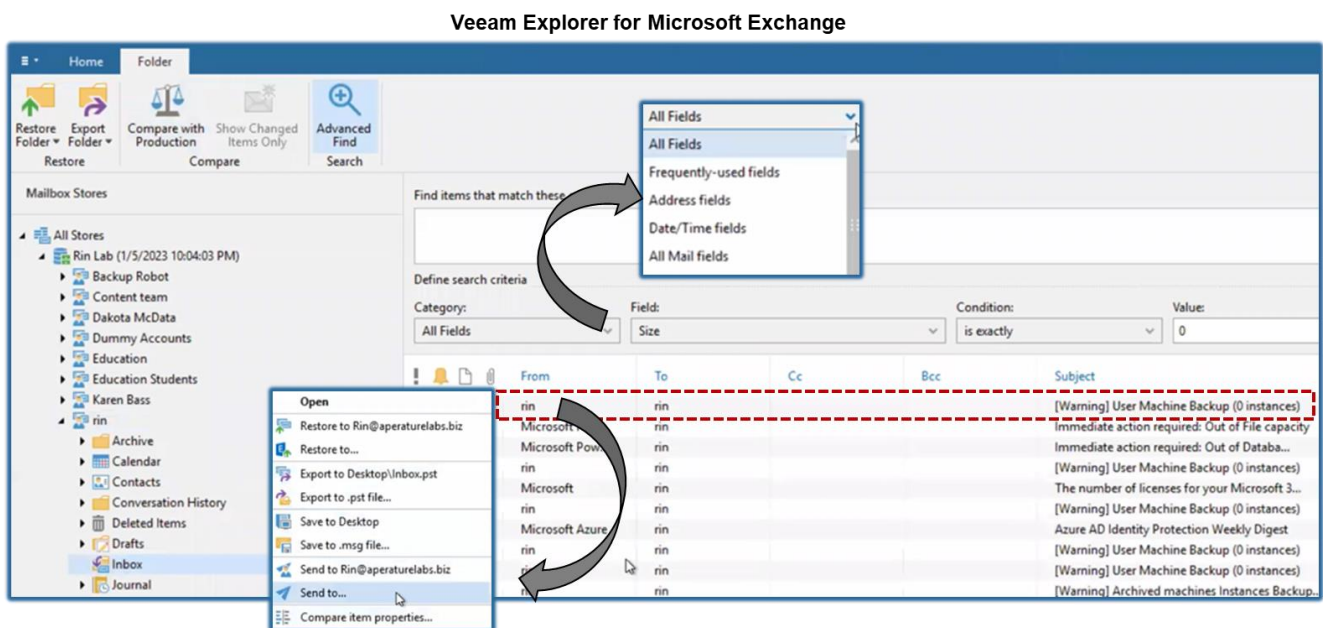
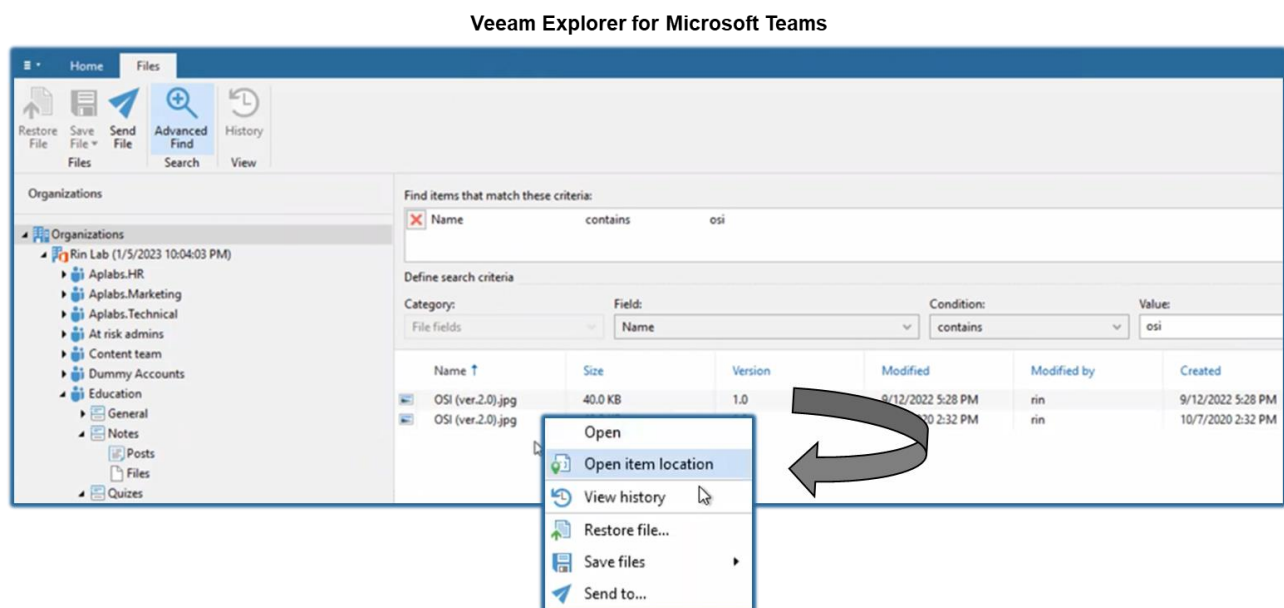*Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.*

Other key features of Veeam Explorer for Microsoft Exchange include:

- Restore Exchange item to Exchange Online mailbox or items
- Restore Exchange item to Exchange On-premises line mailbox or items

- Entire folder, mailbox compare and restore of missing/changed items
- Self-service restores for Exchange items

- Service provider restores of an Exchange item for a tenant
- Mail Exchange item as an attachment

Recovering Teams with Veeam Backup for Microsoft 365

Microsoft Teams is a real-time collaboration and communication tool that makes it easy to stay in contact within and outside an organization. This means that business collaboration data is exchanged and must be protected to meet business, compliance, and data governance mandates. As shown in Figure 5, we searched for files with OSI and found two versions. We selected one and were then able to open the item location, view history, restore file, save file, or send the file as an attachment.

Figure 5. Highlights of Veeam Explorer for Microsoft Teams

Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Veeam Backup for Microsoft 365 helps make Microsoft Teams recovery *intuitive and simple* with the integrated Veeam Explorer views, as shown in Figure 5. It also adds this additional functionality to provide a robust solution to protect any organization's critical data residing in Microsoft Teams on Microsoft 365:

- Restore a Team with its membership and settings

- Restore missing/changed Team members

- Self-service restores of an entire team

- Export and restore selected posts as HTML

- Export or restore posts within the specified time period

- Self-service export of team posts to an HTML file

- Restore a file, tab, or channel to its original location

- Save or send posts as MSG

- Self-service restores of a channel, tab, or specific team

> ### Why This Matters
>
> Protecting the critical messaging data residing in Microsoft Exchange and Teams is vital to organizations of all sizes. The data within these applications has its own retention, but it does not fully protect against accidental deletion or security threats that may lead to data loss. It can also fall short in the ability to enable long-term retention for compliance or regulatory reasons. For a complete solution with full accountability, organizations are turning to third-party vendors like Veeam to meet their Microsoft 365 data protection requirements.

Recovering OneDrive for Business with Veeam Backup for Microsoft 365

Microsoft OneDrive for Business is a file hosting service that enables users to share and synchronize their files. OneDrive also works as the storage backend of the web version of Microsoft 365.

Veeam protects OneDrive for Business because it is business-critical. More and more companies are using it to share files, folders, and OneNote books internally. We performed a granular restore with Veeam Explorer for Microsoft OneDrive for Business, as shown in Figure 6. A search was run for documents in a Veeam OneDrive backup. We then had the option to select a file and take actions such as view history, restore, copy, save, or send the document as an attachment. The application can restore data in-place, to another OneDrive user, or to another folder in OneDrive. If there is a ransomware attack and an organization's OneDrive folder gets encrypted, Veeam can easily enable the organization to perform a full restore.

Figure 6. Highlights for Veeam Explorer for Microsoft OneDrive for Business
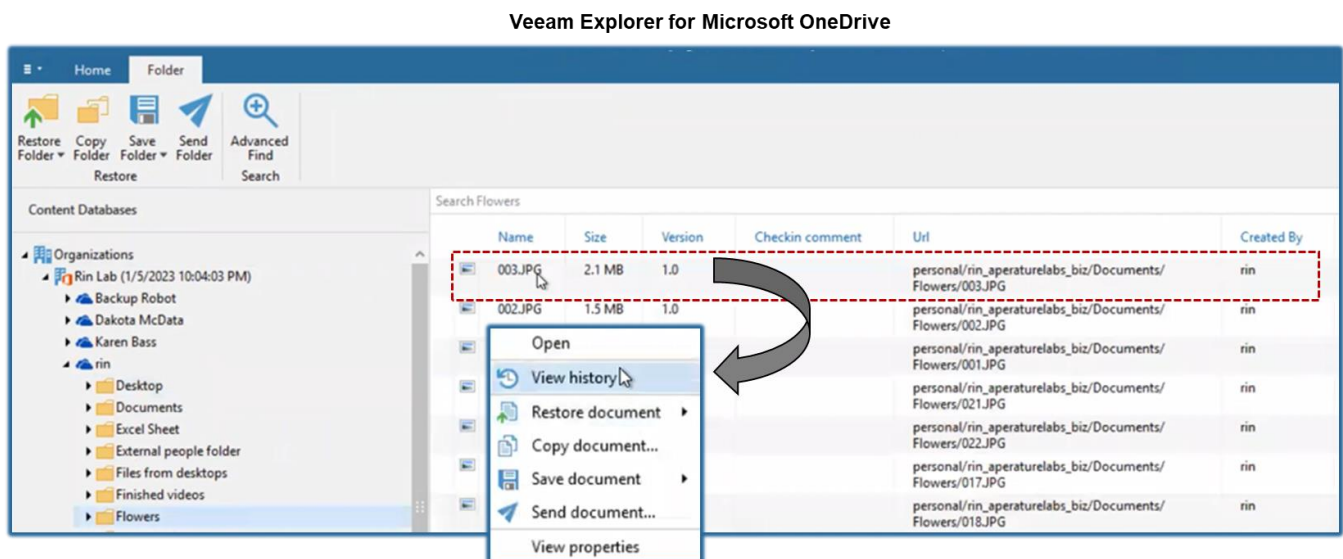
Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Other key features of Veeam Explorer for OneDrive for Business include:

- Restore folder or files to OneDrive for business

- Restore any file to a prior version

- Restore without extended attributes and custom controls

- Restore and overwrite users, folders, or files

- Self-service restores for OneDrive for Business files

- Restore but keep original users, folders, and files

- Save multiple files and folders as ZIP

- Restore with extended attributes and custom access controls

- Restore OneDrive file, folder, or user for a tenant

Why This Matters

Microsoft OneDrive for Business has become pervasive in organizations since individuals find it convenient to use OneDrive to synchronize their files between devices. This use case makes it essential for organizations to add protecting OneDrive data to the guidelines of their corporate data protection policies and procedures. Veeam offers a comprehensive protection option across all of Microsoft 365.

Recovering SharePoint with Veeam Backup for Microsoft 365

Microsoft SharePoint is a web-based collaborative platform that integrates with Microsoft 365 and acts as a document management, collaboration, and storage system for many organizations, making it a vital business and collaboration data repository that needs protection and recovery capabilities.

Veeam provides data protection with granular restore capabilities to SharePoint, as shown in Figure 7. We ran a search in a SharePoint backup to find individual items needed for recovery. These items include documents, calendars, libraries, and lists. We chose a list to restore and were able to restore it to its original list. This same process could be used for other types of items, including the option to restore an entire SharePoint site if needed. Veeam can also help SharePoint backup data being migrated from an on-premises instance or running in a hybrid scenario.

Figure 7. Veeam Explorer for SharePoint
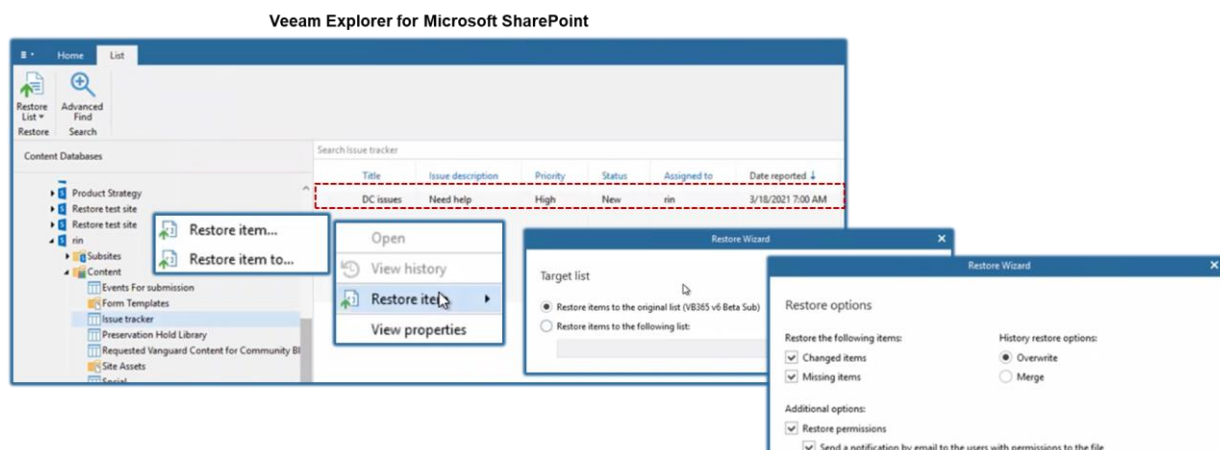
Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Some of the core features of Veeam Explorer for Microsoft SharePoint include:

- Restore online sites, libraries, and documents to SharePoint Online

- Restore an object to a prior version

- Email SharePoint objects as an attachment

- Restore on-premises sites and more to SharePoint on-premises

- Restore SharePoint items to another location

- Save SharePoint objects as a file

- Save multiple SharePoint objects as a ZIP

- Self-service restores for SharePoint objects

- Restore of a SharePoint object for a tenant

Why This Matters

SharePoint has become widely used within organizations and their ecosystems of partners to collaborate on documents and provide centralized repositories of documents with strong access controls. As such, protection and restoration is of the utmost importance. Veeam not only provides the granular capabilities needed for SharePoint backup and restore, but it also allows an organization to have one solution, driven by corporate governance, that covers all critical data.

Conclusion

Mission-critical data and applications have moved to the cloud in the past few years and organizations of all sizes are now running many business-critical functions in the cloud. This is particularly true for collaboration and communication platforms such as Microsoft 365, which is a standard for a vast majority of organizations around the world. Wherever applications and data live, data protection and recovery mechanisms must be applied. It is, quite literally, the law. There are too many threats, criminal or just simply technical, that can damage data and halt critical business applications, often causing irreparable consequences for the business should recovery be impossible.

The problem is that many organizations wrongly believe that because their data and applications are now delivered as a service, it will be automatically backed up and recovered. The reality is that this is just not the case. While the SaaS provider will protect its own infrastructure and data, for the purposes of running their service, customer satisfaction, and compliance, etc., you—the end-user organization—are always responsible for your data.

Enterprise Strategy Group research made this disconnect very clear. When we zoomed in on Microsoft 365, we identified that a vast majority of organizations report not being able to recover 100% of their data, which is the "design point" for mission-critical applications. That's why a solution like Veeam's is key. It makes business sense. It makes technical sense. And it does not require your teams to have PhDs in backup and recovery to deploy. Backup is key, but the real prize is recovery, and that's what we believe makes the Veeam solution for Microsoft 365 a solution you should consider evaluating.