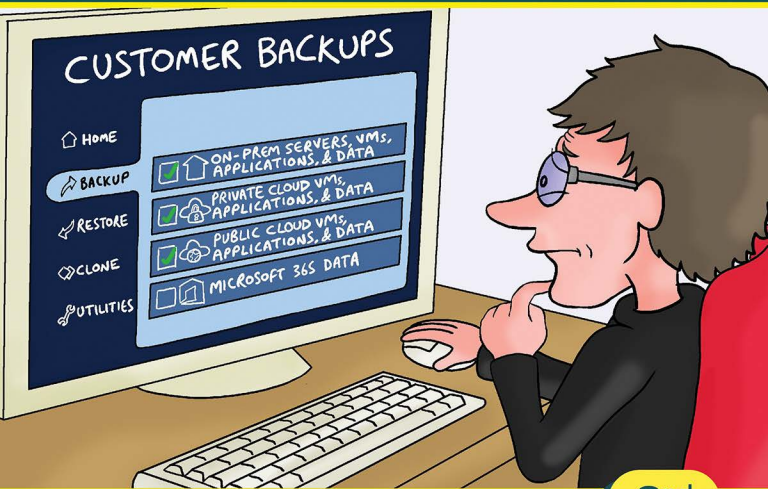




ConversationalGeek®

Conversational Microsoft 365 BaaS for MSPs

Nick Cavallancia (Microsoft MVP)



Learn about:

- Why BaaS for Microsoft 365 makes sense for organizations of all sizes
- What you need to look for in a BaaS solution for Microsoft 365

2nd
MINI
Edition

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Headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, with offices in more than 30 countries, Veeam protects over 450,000 customers worldwide, including 82% of the Fortune 500 and 69% of the Global 2,000. Veeam's global ecosystem includes 35,000+ technology partners, resellers and service providers, and alliance partners.

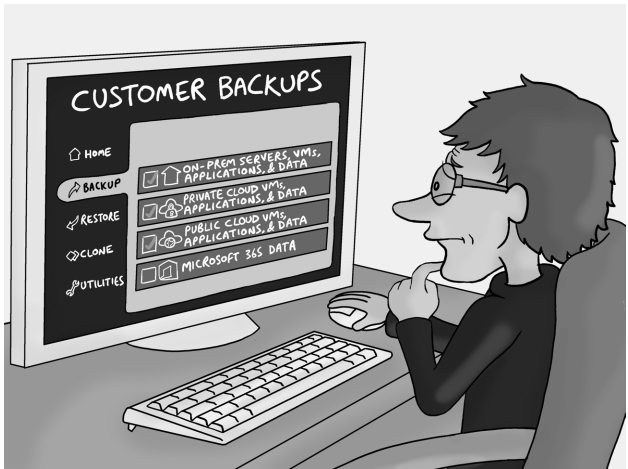


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by Nick Cavalancia

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The “Conversational” Method

We have two objectives when we create a “Conversational” book. First, to make sure it’s written in a conversational tone so that it’s fun and easy to read. Second, to make sure you, the reader, can immediately take what you read and include it into your own conversations (personal or business-focused) with confidence.

“Geek in the Mirror” Boxes

We infuse humor and insight into our books through both cartoons and light banter from the author. When you see one of these boxes it’s the author stepping outside the dialog to speak directly to you. It might be an anecdote; it might be a personal experience.



Within these boxes I can share just about anything on the subject at hand. Read 'em!

Extending BaaS to Microsoft 365



In the last few years, we've all seen data protection, backups and business continuity become mainstream concerns for a larger portion of SMB organizations. The expectation for businesses of every size (including the small ones!) is now to be

always available and accessible for customers, partners, contractors and employees.

One of the factors that makes this a challenge is the mix of resources on-premises, in a datacenter, in a private cloud and public cloud and the use of SaaS applications that all make up your customer's operations. Every piece needs to be protected and made recoverable.

Many managed service providers (MSPs) (likely, including your organization) already offer Backup-as-a-Service (BaaS) to customers – including managed backup and recovery of critical infrastructure, applications, data and systems – with the purpose and goal of putting the entirety of the customer's environment back into an operational state. This is far easier to accomplish when either the customer or you take ownership of the on-premises infrastructure and applications supporting their data. It's still pretty cut and dry when using the cloud to host systems and applications, because you are simply supporting the backing up of a virtual environment hosted by a cloud provider.

But, what about when it comes to SaaS applications like Microsoft 365? I'm going to guess most of you have moved your customers onto Microsoft 365 and have them using (at a minimum) Exchange Online, if not also SharePoint, One Drive for Business or even Teams.

It's estimated that there are over one million businesses worldwide running on Microsoft 365 today; even new customers you acquire are likely already using Microsoft 365 as well. So, shouldn't you include Microsoft 365 as part of your BaaS service offering?



Some of you might not even be offering BaaS yet – should you still be thinking about offering Backup-as-a-Service for Microsoft 365? If your customers are running it, *you should*. Keep reading, as the remainder of this e-book is very applicable to you as well.

Why Include Microsoft 365?

With such a proliferation of businesses relying on Microsoft 365 to operate some part of their business operations, the opportunity is there for you to extend your backup as a service offering. Extending (or initially offering) BaaS to protect your customer's Microsoft 365 investment makes sense from a business, technical and customer perspective. Let's cover each of these aspects of the discussion.

BaaS for Microsoft 365 makes business sense

Whether you currently offer BaaS for on-premises and/or cloud workloads or not, adding the managed protection of Microsoft 365 data to the mix of your current services makes sense for a number of reasons, which include:

- 1) **Greater market share of Microsoft 365 Users** – With an estimated 345 million Microsoft 365 users, extending services to protect Microsoft 365 data creates a lucrative foot-in-the-door backup opportunity when prospecting new

customers. Moreover, it establishes your business' credibility as a trusted advisor of data protection needs that can extend beyond just backing up Microsoft 365 instances.

- 2) **New and sustainable revenue streams** – Beyond the obvious “you’re making money on a new service” angle, think about the additional revenue stream security; should a customer, say, go completely to cloud-based applications and services, leaving no in-house infrastructure to be backed up, you maintain an ability to manage the backups of their most critical online investment (and I presume the list of cloud-based services you protect will only grow in the future).
- 3) **Minimized customer operational risk** – Those customers who understand what the impact would be if they lost some or all of their business-critical data will equally understand the risk involved in utilizing Microsoft 365 applications without having the data backed up. By offering BaaS for Microsoft 365, you reduce

the risk of your customers losing operational data that they rely on every day.

- 4) **Increased breadth of services** – If you've been doing this long enough, you have already experienced picking up a new customer, or expanding your depth of services with existing clients, just because you supported some platform, application or system. It's the same thing here; the expansion of backup services to include Microsoft 365 is one more checkbox for customers that are looking for a one-stop MSP shop whose services align with their growing operations.
- 5) **Microsoft isn't backing it up** – It needs to be covered (albeit, briefly) that Microsoft makes it clear in their Service Agreement that everything your customers place onto the Microsoft 365 environment belongs to the customer and it is not Microsoft's responsibility to maintain it.



To make it even more clear, Microsoft places the following statement into their Service Agreement (emphasis is mine):

*“We don’t claim ownership of Your Content. Your Content remains Your Content **and you are responsible for it.**”*

- 6) **Neither is your customer** – Assuming you’re managing your customer’s backups, they’re probably just assuming Microsoft is handling it, or worse, assuming *you*, as their trusted advisor is handling it.

OK, so it makes sense from a business perspective, but even with Microsoft not technically backing it up, is it technically necessary for MSPs to add Microsoft 365 to BaaS offerings?

BaaS for Microsoft 365 makes technical sense

With the knowledge that your customer is on their own to make certain their data is protected, the “techie in the room” may argue that Microsoft 365

provides some preventative capabilities that protect the current state of a customer's data across all their important services. They're not wrong – there's Deleted Item Retention, Document Versioning, Archiving and Recovery capabilities (depending on which Microsoft 365 service we're talking about).

However (and it's a BIG *however*), none of the provided capabilities are there to facilitate a backup and recovery of Microsoft 365 data. They more so exist to provide protection against the simplest of dangers to Microsoft 365 data – *accidental deletion*. But, beyond that, there are some reasons why including Microsoft 365 in your BaaS offering makes technical sense:

- 1) **It's just another customer data set** – If your BaaS offering includes protecting and managing your customer's data, applications and systems (as is appropriate based on where they reside), how is the data within Microsoft 365 any different? In short, *it isn't*.
- 2) **Native capabilities aren't backups** – Remember that one reason to have backups is so you can

restore to somewhere else, should it be needed. All of the capabilities I previously mentioned are in-application functions that only help in that same instance, within that same application. So, for example, should you need to recover an Exchange mailbox back to an on-premises server, none of the native capabilities can assist. Backups can provide you (and therefore, your customer) with options of where to recover data to.



At best, Microsoft offers 93 days of protection through its Deleted Item Retention Time capabilities across most of its services.

- 3) **Loss of data kills the customer** – As with any data loss, there is downtime, a loss in productivity, customer confidence, revenues, etc., all at an associated cost. According to Veeam's® *Data Protection Report 2022*, the

estimated cost of downtime per hour averages out to \$88,000. While that probably is more representative of much larger, midsized and enterprise organizations, even if you whittled that down to some estimated more reasonable and representative figure – like \$5,000 per hour – you know it would still hurt your customer just as much. If your customer can't communicate via email, get on Teams meetings, etc., I'm certain you believe it would have an impact.

- 4) **Backups are all about an ability to recover** – If you're going to promote a BaaS offering, the customer is looking to you to be able to recover their environment back to a specific point in time. And, given the operational reliance some organizations have on the sum total of the Microsoft 365 applications they use, you need to be able to apply the same backup/recovery litmus test to the customer's data within Microsoft 365.

I'm guessing, by now, you understand the reasons why you should consider including Microsoft 365

in your BaaS offering. But are there real circumstances from the customer perspective when they actually *need* managed backups of their Microsoft 365 data?

BaaS for Microsoft 365 makes customer sense

Even if you understand the need for including Microsoft 365, your customer may still need some convincing. I've already covered one scenario – accidental deletion – where backups can be valuable to return the customer to a known-operational state. But there are a few more they will need to consider.

- 1) **Recovery past retention times** – Microsoft, at best, only covers 93 days of retention time across its major services. Should data be needed from last quarter, or last year, backups are the only option.
- 2) **Insider threats are alive and well** – Malicious insiders are still responsible for 26% of

incidents¹, where data deletion and/or manipulation can be in order.

- 3) **Cybercriminals LOVE Microsoft 365** – Online credentials are the number one target of phishing attacks, with one-fifth of attacks impersonating Microsoft² in an attempt to gain access to a user's Microsoft 365 account. Compromising a user's credentials enables their account to be hijacked and the compromised user to be impersonated as part of Business Email Compromise. There's also an opportunity to establish credibility by using OneDrive and SharePoint to host malicious content for other attacks. And emails, chats, files, lists and more can all be modified for malicious purposes, requiring they be returned to a known-secure state.

¹ Ponemon, *Cost of Insider Threats Report* (2022)

² Abnormal Security, *H2 Email Threat Report* (2022)

- 4) **Deleting a user is (eventually) permanent** –
Once a user is deleted, Microsoft generally holds onto their data for 30 days—and then it's gone forever.

- 5) **Legal and compliance requirements** – Just because the data is hosted in the cloud doesn't mean it's not subject to local, state and federal regulations. Depending on where the customer is located and the type of industry they are in, there may be data and service availability requirements that may influence backup and recovery needs – even when the data resides in the Microsoft cloud.

- 6) **Microsoft 365 has become “the office”** – I assume you've already come to experience more customers looking to run their business operations in the cloud; and that includes all of their communication/collaboration, making Microsoft 365 that much more critical to the availability of your customer's business.

As you can see, Microsoft 365 BaaS makes sense and is a win for all involved. The question then becomes “*What should your offering look like?*”

Offering Microsoft 365 BaaS

There are plenty of solutions that exist today that assist in the backing up and recovering of Microsoft 365 data. To define your service offering, a lot will depend on the solution you choose. So, instead of starting with a list of capabilities found in a given solution, let’s define your Microsoft 365 BaaS by looking at what the *service* should be able to accomplish.

Backup from and to the cloud

There’s a reason your customer is leveraging the cloud; they don’t want the cost of owning, supporting and maintaining infrastructure, systems, applications, etc. So, it makes sense that your offering should equally leverage the cloud, with backup and recovery managed from a cloud-based application.

Additionally, the backups created should be stored with a cloud provider that meets both your needs and your customer's requirements — not only from a monitoring and management standpoint but from a cost, retention, performance and legal perspective as well.

Recover to more than just Microsoft 365

Despite the fact that nearly no organizations using Microsoft 365 are considering an exit in favor of another cloud vendor or perhaps moving back on-prem, it's still a possibility you may need to address one day. I've already raised the idea of recovering to an on-premises instance of Exchange; the larger picture here is providing your customer the ability to avoid vendor lock-in – even when we're talking about Microsoft.

Centralize your backup and recovery efforts

As with your current backup offering (or, for those not offering BaaS today, think about how you offer, say, RMM), the entirety of your management is done via the cloud, maintaining an ability to support

customers remotely, while improving the speed and quality of service. This should equally apply to BaaS around Microsoft 365.

Additionally, if your MSP practice is mature enough, you're already well down the path of "let's use as few consoles as is humanly possible, please!" Ideally, your backups of Microsoft 365 should be accomplished in the very same solution you perform backups of customer resources that reside on-premises, in a data center or somewhere in the cloud.

Be able to run your Microsoft BaaS as a business

Because BaaS is one of those services that gets little visibility by the customer unless there's a major catastrophe, you also need the ability to address the business side of backups, including providing usage reporting, licensing and invoicing easily to the customer through either built-in functionalities or via integrations with other MSP-centric solutions.

Looking beyond just Microsoft 365 BaaS

It's safe to guess some or all of your customers are already using Microsoft 365. But what about when the conversation turns to Azure, AWS, Google Cloud, etc.? It should also be said that by having an established BaaS offering around a platform you know well, evolving that offering based on the specific cloud needs of your customers becomes super easy.

The Big Takeaways

Organizations have embraced outsourcing much of their technology, which has given rise to the need for MSPs to address the daily tasks of managing and maintaining this new investment. The reliance on Microsoft 365 has created a unique opportunity for MSPs to help customers protect their data in the same “hands-off” way the customer uses Microsoft 365 itself.

MSPs looking to offer Microsoft 365 BaaS should consider why it's not just important, but mandatory, why customers will face data loss scenarios, and how offering this service benefits your business. Once you begin down the path of offering Microsoft 365 BaaS, start with your business needs first and work towards a solution that doesn't just perform backup and recovery, but one that truly empowers your business of protecting Microsoft 365.

Microsoft 365 Data Protection, Powered by Veeam

It's one thing having a good understanding of the benefits your customers gain from having a BaaS solution in place for their Microsoft 365 data, the trickiest part can be actually finding and evaluating a solution that does all that, with the right partner to fit your business and IT needs.

For over 10 years, Veeam® has been an industry leader at powering BaaS and DRaaS. More than 400,000 organizations around the world currently trust their critical data to be protected by Veeam solutions, including 82% of the Fortune 500. Veeam is also consistently named a top data protection leader by Gartner and IDC, among other industry analysts.

Powerful software

Veeam Backup *for Microsoft 365* can help you protect your customers, however big or small, including on-premises Exchange and SharePoint

deployments or hybrid Microsoft 365 environments.

Veeam Backup *for Microsoft 365* enables your BaaS offering to ensure your customer's Microsoft 365 backup data is untouchable by ransomware threats, is easily monitored, and that any issues encountered can be quickly remediated

Backups can be made immutable to keep them from being deleted or encrypted by ransomware threat actors, and can be stored on secondary cloud storage to further separate backups from the operating environment.

With full visibility into your Microsoft 365 backup environment, you know exactly what's happening around backup jobs, proxies, and repositories – often before an issue occurs.

BaaS customers still maintain control and autonomy (as is desired) with the Self-Service Restore Portal to securely restore emails, files and more from one centralized location.

On top of this, Veeam Backup *for Microsoft 365* now integrates with Veeam Service Provider Console, a free MSP-centric web-interface, provide you with centralized remote license management and usage reporting capabilities.

You can find out more about Veeam Backup *for Microsoft 365* at www.veeam.com/backup-microsoft-office-365.html.

Tools designed to help you succeed

The Veeam Service Provider Console mentioned above is a powerful free platform for MSPs, which offers customer onboarding, licensing, billing and white-labeling capabilities via one simple interface.

The ease of use and flexibility to centrally manage all of your customers' Veeam-powered workloads, offered allows MSPs to boost productivity and accelerate revenue.

Veeam Service Provider Console is also API equipped so you can easily integrate into third-party and existing proprietary platforms to

streamline productivity and further centralize customer management.

You can learn more about Veeam Service Provider Console at www.veeam.com/service-provider-availability-console.html

Build or buy

Of course, with Veeam you get the software and tools you need to build and go to market with a powerful revenue-generating BaaS solution, as well as an exclusive monthly licensing and pricing model that grows with you. However, not every MSP has the budget or resources to implement and maintain the infrastructure needed to support this. If that is the case for your MSP, Veeam also has a network of trusted service providers who offer channel-ready BaaS solutions, complete with remote monitoring and management. So, you can still provide your customers with industry-leading data protection via a cost-effective OPEX model that falls in line with many of the MSP solutions you are likely already using.

Find out more about the Veeam's monthly pricing model at www.veeam.com/service-providers.html

If you want to find out more about the company's network of trusted service providers visit propartner.veeam.com/vcsp-reseller-ready-directory



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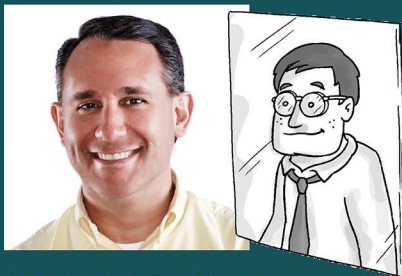
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With organizations increasingly relying on Microsoft 365, MSPs have a unique opportunity to help customers protect their data in the same “hands-off” way the customer uses Microsoft 365 itself. This book discusses why offering BaaS for Microsoft 365 is critical and how it can help MSPs grow.



About Nick Cavalancia

Nick Cavalancia is a 4-time Microsoft Cloud and Datacenter MVP, has over 25 years of enterprise IT experience, is an accomplished consultant, speaker, trainer, writer, and columnist.



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