



**Upgrading Your Backup  
Software: Improve While You  
Move**

A Consonus White Paper

August 2009



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## Executive Summary

IT organizations today are facing increased demands on their incumbent data protection capabilities. Many are straining under ever-increasing amounts of information that need protecting, while simultaneously being faced with ongoing upgrade requirements such as new software versions or end-of-life support for certain versions. Wise IT organizations are viewing this combination of challenges as an opportunity for a technology refresh that better serves the needs of the business in terms of data protection.

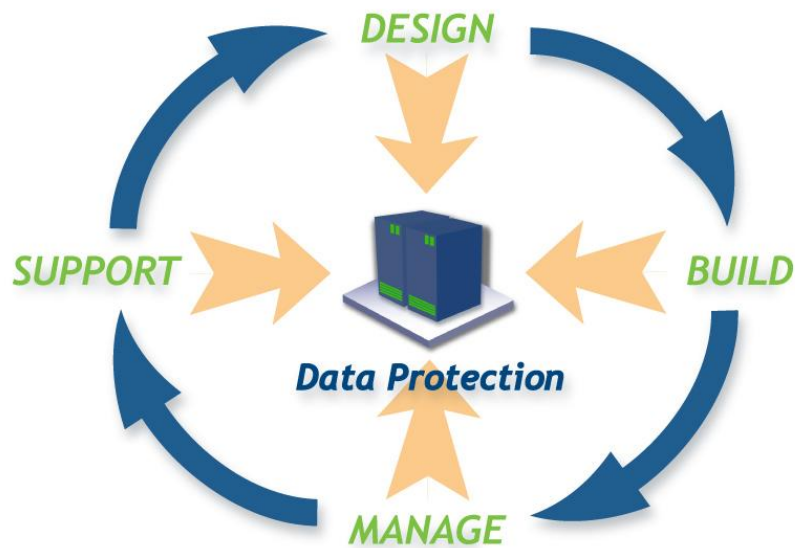
This white paper will explore how and why assessing the current state of data protection, measured against business-driven requirements, provides exceptional corporate value when faced with significant upgrade challenges.

## Data Protection Implementations Face Many Challenges

Many IT organizations today are facing challenges to their incumbent data protection capabilities from a variety of sources. Depending upon which industry reports you may read, corporate information growth averages anywhere between 50 - 80%. Backup systems are straining to meet reasonable backup windows and SLAs for information recovery. Other corporate governance initiatives—for encryption, archiving and eDiscovery, business continuity, remote office backups, and data immutability—all place pressures on current data protection strategies. These new requirements often lead to bolt-on solutions or overly complex configurations utilizing available or legacy resources. Furthermore, given the overwhelming demands on IT, data protection schemes fall slowly but surely out of currency. Even well-architected environments, when deprived of consistent attention, fail to meet the current needs of the business. And often times this gap between required and actual protection levels is not visible to decision makers. The result is, many data protection strategies are simply no longer appropriately architected to provide comprehensive data protection capabilities in a timely or flexible manner, and often require Herculean efforts from the IT organization just to remain operationally effective.

## Don't Just Amplify Your Current Problems

To complicate matters even further, many customers who currently employ enterprise-class backup software such as Symantec Veritas NetBackup are feeling the pressure to upgrade to the latest major versions for reasons related to product support and improved feature sets. Many realize that this is a significant undertaking, including considerations for new underlying backup catalog technologies, adherence to stringent upgrade procedures, new licensing options, and new features for a wide array of complementary technologies include storage, applications, VTL, archiving software and disk-to-disk backups.



*Figure 1. The IT lifecycle as it applies to data protection considerations. Giving significant due diligence to the “improve” phase can yield significant dividends since technologies continuously change as do business requirements.*

## Consonus - A Proven Leader

Consonus has a long and successful history of addressing the product lifecycle upgrade portions of our clients’ key infrastructure solutions like backup/recovery software. Many clients we work with share the same insights: “I don’t want to simply upgrade my backup application and amplify my current challenges. I want to understand how I can mitigate current challenges while taking advantage of new technologies and features to address newer data protection requirements—and hopefully reducing my operational staff’s burden.”

## Improve While You Move: Assess and Build a Migration Roadmap

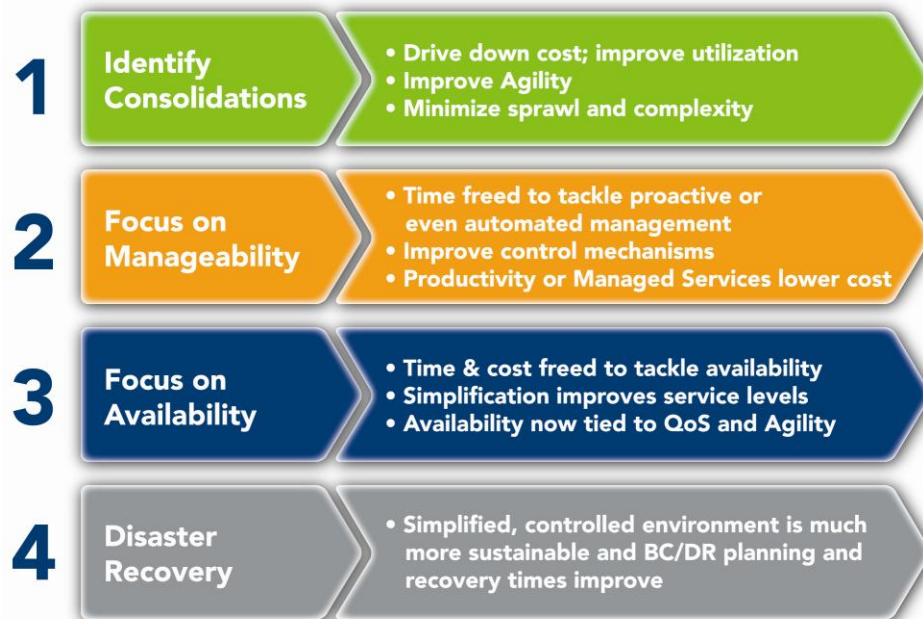
Consonus is adept at facilitating this “improve while you move” philosophy for many of our customers. We have paired our IT Consulting assessment capabilities with our extensive Symantec Veritas NetBackup architecture and engineering deployment experience, creating a service offering that ensures your backup software upgrade is part of a *comprehensive* data protection *strategy*—rather than just a tactical event—that elevates backup software migration efforts to a true data protection enhancement strategy. Our proven IT Consulting methodology combines a thorough interview process—to identify new, forward-looking data protection requirements—with data-gathering tools that expose gaps and configuration challenges in your current environment.

These interviews allow us to compile information from IT storage, server, network and application teams and can be extended to business line architects and project managers, information security teams, compliance officers, IT senior management, and any other appropriate persons who influence or articulate data protection needs. For specific data-gathering tools, we employ Symantec Veritas Backup Reporter to gather technical and operational details on configuration,

policies, tape utilization and rotation, errors, and information throughput across your NetBackup, Symantec Backup Exec, Tivoli Storage Manager, CommVault and/or Legato environments.

The resulting deliverable is a technology roadmap that considers *your* business requirements in the context of the current technologies employed. Solutions can include improvements to current backup configuration and policies and, in the case of NetBackup, will provide an upgrade strategy. Recommendations for improvements include the use of new technical capabilities, *consolidation* of environments, integration with storage and applications or security, with a focus on the *availability* and *manageability* of the resulting environment. We also investigate how alternative service delivery models, such as managed service providers, might prove to be part of an effective strategy. Finally, we also investigate how data protection strategy can be leveraged for all or part of a comprehensive *disaster recovery* strategy.

### Consonus Power of 4: Advancing the Data Center



*Figure 2: The Consonus Data Center Advancement Strategy. All IT Consulting data center assessments address these four strategic areas as part of comprehensive solution development. More detail can be found in Consonus' July 2008 white paper, "The Power of Four: Key Steps to Advancing Data Centers for Maximum Business Impact," at [www.consonus.com/powerof4/](http://www.consonus.com/powerof4/).*

### Tangible Results

The benefit of these up-front assessments has proven to be immense. Companies can expect to find a more efficient, less costly post-assessment upgrade process. Also, significant reduction in capital and operational expenditures have been realized by numerous customers by combining architectural improvements and process improvements in their data protection strategy. This is especially true in terms of investing to meet new and future requirements.

Equally important is that the assessment can be performed in as little as two weeks. The majority of time consideration is for the accurate collection of information using the data collection tool. Like reducing cost, the pre-upgrade assessment has the effect of streamlining and shortening the time to upgrade the current environment. It also carries the benefits of optimizing the new environment for operational efficiencies, which will ultimately reward the client in terms of Return on Time Invested (ROTI).

## Conclusion

### **Improving Your Data Protection Strategy — It's More Than Just a Backup Software Upgrade**

The consideration for today's IT manager is to think, "Improve While You Move". Instead of simply upgrading your current headaches or deficiencies, use a tech refresh as an *opportunity to improve* both the environment and IT's level of service to its business customers. More often than not, the efficiencies discovered by an effective assessment of the current backup environment—canvassing corporate requirements and coupling them with state-of-the-art technologies—will more than pay for the cost of the assessment, as well as a large portion of the eventual technology refresh.

## A Consonus Case Study

### **A New Data Protection Strategy for a Large Mutual Insurance Company**

A large mutual insurance company with over \$4 billion in managed assets was facing several pressures associated with their current data protection strategy. Of primary concern was the fact that organic business growth was pushing their current backup strategy to its limit. Nearly 10% of their backup jobs were not meeting the defined backup window, affecting production in the first few hours of the workday. These delays were also causing tape vaulting jobs to run very long—in many cases missing the offsite tape courier's pickup. This essentially created an extra 24-hour gap in offsite tape rotation, resulting in additional exposure risk for the company.

The company was also facing expiration of support for their current product version and installation, and they were anxious to upgrade to the latest major version. However, they wanted to ensure that the upgrade would not exacerbate the existing performance challenges or introduce new ones. They also realized there had been significant technology improvements in the software (and elsewhere in the industry) that might prove beneficial in helping them to overcome their backup and recovery challenges. The overriding challenge was to determine what technical advancements would provide the best cost benefits considering corporate growth and application profile.

Consonus responded with a strategic data protection assessment rooted in our IT Consulting framework. The assessment used backup reporting tools to validate the limits to which the backup environment was being pushed. Tape utilization, throughput, performance, and server and SAN configuration were evaluated, from which it was determined that indeed, the customer would not be best served by simply upgrading the current configuration.



The assessment then took into consideration remote offices, data security, virtualization initiatives, and advancements in storage technologies to craft a cost-justified solution that met the anticipated needs of the company 18-36 months into the future. The findings included recommendations for upgrading and reconfiguring the backup software, implementing new features of the company's current storage platform, and outsourcing the backups of the remote office to a managed services provider. The solution proved cost-effective through the near-elimination of tapes in the environment, a reduction of backup-related software licenses, and a reduction of operational expense for managing the environment.

## About Consonus

Consonus is an IT solutions provider of Data Centers, IT Consulting and Infrastructure, and Managed Services. Our comprehensive suite of IT Infrastructure Services combined with our highly secure and reliable data centers, allow us to address our customers' critical needs of data protection, disaster recovery, and virtualization.

To learn how Consonus can improve your business based on its extensive experience and background as a provider of IT infrastructure, data center solutions, and related managed services, visit [www.consonus.com](http://www.consonus.com).



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