

Backup & archive

Off-site backup protects the customers of KPD Services from data loss

Backups, especially external backups, are clearly the best defence against cyberattacks. In the event that a hacker does manage to infiltrate your systems or even block them, an *off-site backup* will enable you to get working again quickly.

The construction sector is no different in this respect. When KPD Services supplies companies in this sector with the infrastructure on which their ERP software, BouwOffice, is to run, it immediately takes a secure backup. And because it is essential that a backup always be restorable, it opts for both a local and an external backup. KPD speaks about its backup arrangements for ultimate data security.

KPD Services: software and services for construction companies

It is beyond dispute that the digitalisation of processes in the construction business has produced huge gains in terms of time saving and productivity. KPD Services, based in Halen (Belgium), has been involved in digitalisation for businesses in the construction sector for 35 years – from general construction through renovation and road building to installation and project development.

It offers ICT advice and specialised tools that make managing and tracking projects easier. Over the

years, KPD Services has accumulated extensive experience – it knows the workings of the construction sector inside out and understands its needs. This experience, supplemented by studies,





led to the development of various tools that improve the administrative and operational processes in a measurable and sustainable way.

BouwOffice is KPD's premier product. A fully modularised package, which comprises a combination of ERP solutions with apps and tools for project and site management. "The complete administration of the project runs correctly within one software package – everything from the bill of quantities up to and including project handover", asserts **Catherine Gressens, KPD's CEO**.



BouwOffice: software to suit any construction company

It is mainly BouwOffice's richness of content that differentiates this software from other ERP solutions: the extensive range of features and multiplicity of detail make BouwOffice suitable for any business. "When carrying out demos, we can always find a way to automate a customer's process using the facilities of BouwOffice", confirms Marc Goossens, managing director at KPD.

"We can also help to streamline the business processes of companies that are not yet fully automated or that are still working in their 'silos'", adds Catherine. Customers can opt for an immediate complete implementation, or a phased approach. An investment with a big return: because the software facilitates accurate monitoring of its processes, the company can track earnings resulting in a higher return.

Digital cost accounting: a big step forward

According to CEO Catherine Gressens, process digitalisation presents an enormous advantage. "Many construction companies are told that Microsoft Excel makes the ideal tool for cost accounting. That is fine for small construction businesses. But as soon as you have multiple calculators working in a single company, Microsoft's spreadsheet application proves too limited.

Running costings or accounts receivable in Excel is no picnic. And yet another big disadvantage? The likelihood of errors and data loss in Excel is high, because you are working with different files and different versions. That is why modern construction companies opt for a professional calculation program."

A tool such as BouwOffice is therefore ideal, as it prevents errors and simplifies tracking: "**All administration – from cost estimates to handover – is performed within one system**. Employees with differing functions are all able to do their thing. The apps and mobile tools needed for on-site project management are all there. Even the activities of the people on site are easily linked. In Excel, that is virtually impossible", says Catherine.

Service provision makes KPD a one-stop shop

KPD does not only provide software; it is also a service provider for the construction sector. It implements the software, provides the infrastructure



required and looks after customers' needs from A to Z – from pre-sales to architecture, implementation and support. Many customers prefer one-stop shopping that provides them not only with the software but also with a permanent partner for the rest of the IT infrastructure.

For that reason, KPD collaborates with partners for other services, e.g. with Combella. Managing director Marc Goossens explains: "We have put a big emphasis on partnerships for several years. If you are able to collaborate on the digitalisation of a business with a recognised partner like Combella, then the implementation process goes a lot more smoothly, and this keeps the customer's costs down. You do not have to keep 'reinventing the wheel' over and over again..."

Cybersecurity is of paramount importance to KPD

KPD attaches great importance to security. "Security is a cat-and-mouse game. You may get a good report about your security today, but that is not to say that it will still be the case tomorrow. Cybersecurity is a serious business, not something you simply organise 'in your spare time'", emphasizes **Ivan Henderix, system engineer and responsible for technical service.**

"Cybersecurity is of paramount importance to us. That is why we protect ourselves with the expertise of Combella and Veeam for our cloud backups."

Ivan adds: "That is why we surround ourselves with experts for support. We rely on the expertise of Combella and Veeam for backups. Our firewalls are another concern, and their configuration is checked every day. Protection also provided by the Microsoft platform includes Advanced Threat Protection, which scans all e-mails and attachments."

Off-site backups (external cloud backups) are a necessity

Security and backups are also part of the services provided by KPD for its customers. KPD Services does not actually manage the data of its BouwOffice users centrally: the data remain on the customers' servers. Therefore, a **good backup at the customer's is an indispensable part of KPD's service provision.**



Originally, KPD only implemented a backup system from Veeam on the customer's own servers. Why was Veeam chosen back then? "Server virtualisation broke through into the mainstream a good 10 years ago. **Veeam then quickly became the market leader**



for backing up virtual servers (VMs). Other producers of traditional backup software often had difficulty in making a successful transition. We conducted various tests and trials, but Veeam was a clear **winner in terms of facilities and reliability**", explains Ivan.

However, the need for cloud backup became increasingly obvious. Because, no matter how good your local backup is, there is always a chance of it being compromised by a disaster such as fire, theft or ransomware. And then you are left with nothing! So, what you need is an external backup. Naturally, you could do this manually on hard disks to be taken home by someone. But then, someone may be ill or on leave and it gets forgotten, and – hey presto! – that is exactly when a disaster will occur. An automatic backup in the cloud is therefore the recommended solution.

Data are not only secure but also kept private

Ivan Henderix explains the configuration used by KPD for the backups: "We use Veeam software to manage on-site backups for the customer, i.e. on their own premises. This is the primary backup. The data from the last 5 to 10 days are backed up to the cloud. If a huge disaster occurs at the customer's – and that could just as easily be a fire or some other emergency rather than ransomware or a cryptolocker – then it does not make any sense to go back months."

And Ivan speaks with the voice of experience: when one of the customers was hit by ransomware, the

on-site backup was also affected. Fortunately, the data from the off-site backup was able to be restored.

Ivan is aware of the importance in this system of **all data being kept private** in the on-site backups and off-site cloud backups. More on this: KPD let the customer itself sign the contract with Combell. So the customer remains the official owner of its own data – KPD only looks after supervision, management and monitoring. "Not even a single 'bit' ends up in our hands", as Ivan confirms.

Off-site backup as disaster recovery

Offsite backup part of disaster recovery plan Never say never! You must be prepared for the worst at all times. KPD has developed a step-by-step plan for disaster recovery. Ivan explains: "First of all, we examine whether the on-site backups have been affected. We have worked out additional steps in advance to isolate the backups as much as possible from the normal network.

We also set completely different passwords for these backups, ones that are not used anywhere else." This is because an identical password for all services used by a business is one of the weak points that can be exploited by a ransomware attack.

"In a disaster, you must be able to rely on the off-site backup. And then, you first have to bring a new





backup server on site so that Combella can restore everything from the cloud. If it involves a huge amount of data, terabytes for example, then we may contact Combella to restore this on site.”

Veeam Cloud Connect at Combella: transparent price calculation

When KPD went looking for a partner that could provide the



Veeam Cloud Connect services, Combella’s transparency was the deciding factor. Ivan Henderix: “It is quite easy to find these services outside of Belgium. But Combella came out on top for us!

To start with, because it has a good reputation for its other hosting services. We knew it already from its other products and the know-how it has in areas like domain name registration and web servers. Another plus factor was prompt support – in the Dutch language. Other providers have mainly English-speaking helpdesk technicians, but **Combella can assist you in a professional manner in Dutch.**

But most importantly, it was the transparency, in the prices as well, that counted. **You can perform a simulation on the website:** all you need to do is indicate how much storage and how many VMs you need, and you are immediately provided with a cost proposal. You can even refer your customers to this.”

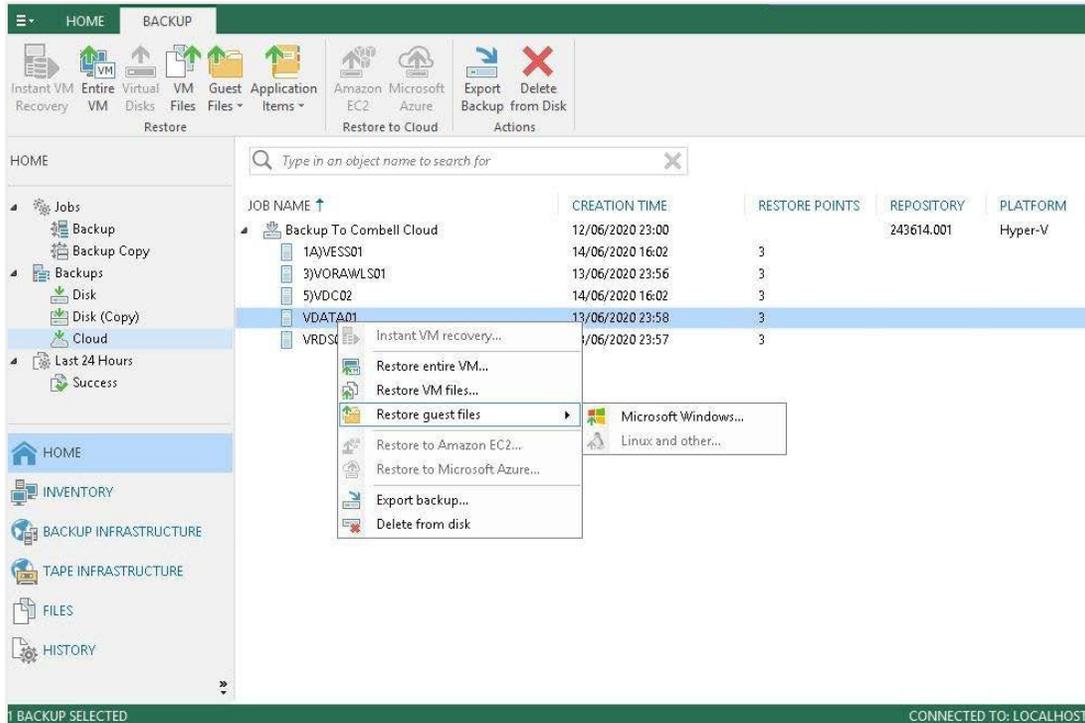
“It is the transparency, linked to the Dutch-speaking helpdesk and thorough, well-managed support that makes Combella our logical choice as partner for Veeam Cloud Connect”

Ivan Henderix

Veeam Cloud Connect: accelerator and convenient console

But why did KPD Services select Veeam Cloud Connect for its own off-site backup? Surely not just because it was already working with Veeam on off-site backups? “No, we actually investigated different cloud backup providers, including Microsoft Azure. But ultimately, we ended up with Veeam for cloud backup.” Veeam Cloud Connect is a bolt-on to the on-site backup, an option to have the backups already present on your own backup servers replicated automatically to the cloud so that you have an additional copy safely secured off-site.

And a further convenience is that KPD Services can now manage both types of backup (on-site and cloud) for the customer via one Veeam control panel in which the different backup options are processed, both NAS and Cloud. This control panel ensures a large degree of transparency, because you need just one tool for all backups and you can set up and monitor everything in it.



In addition, one of Veeam’s **strengths** is its **control over backup quality**. “When you get the message that the backup was successful, you can bet your bottom dollar that this was indeed the case. In that respect, Veeam has a really good reputation”, says Ivan. Conversely, Ivan has configured the console so that it sends a message to KPD and the customer when something goes wrong with the backup. “We look into what is going on, but at the same time the customer knows that he has to do something about its on-site backups.”

But these were not the only reasons for choosing Veeam with Combell. “The Enterprise version of Veeam Cloud Connect also contains a **WAN accelerator. This is capable of increasing backup speeds by up to a factor of 10**. If you inform Combell accordingly, it will be turned on in your subscription, at no extra cost!” And as a bonus, in

addition to replication, the Veeam licence often also incorporates **Veeam One**, a complete monitoring and analysis solution for your backups, virtual and physical environments. With this, you always know the quality of your backups. Imagine if you were struck by a disaster and your backup was corrupt!

Simple setup with password

The incorporation of Veeam Cloud Connect as an additional off-site backup proceeded really smoothly. Ivan relates: “First, we tested out Veeam Cloud Connect on our own IT system. **The calculator on the Combell website** had already enabled us to perform a price simulation. You do not require any special knowledge to do this, as long as you know roughly what you need, i.e. the necessary storage and the number of VMs. Straight away, you are told



the price per month. This seemed quite reasonable to us, and we signed up for it.

Also, the setup was simple: you get a login and password with which to make the connection in your local Veeam application (on premises). And you are allocated an additional cloud repository. You do not have to take an extra course or get involved in a lot of studying: it is fully self-explanatory.”

“And ever since then, we have offered it to the customers as an option”, continues Ivan. In this way, their data are secured off-site completely automatically, and they do not have to worry about it. If there is a fire or some other disaster, or ransomware, their data is out of harm’s way.”

Oosterweel is relying on KPD Services, Veeam and Combella

Recently, KPD Services even got to design the IT solution for the Oosterweel works, the huge project for the Antwerp Ring. That involves a collaboration platform for the various contractors. The choice of Veeam software at Combella was also made for securing the data in this environment.

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