FALCONSTOR®

Backup as a Service – A Growth Driver for Managed Service Providers

## THE BACKUP AS A SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

important so there is little enthusiasm for specialized hardware that requires specialized training and administration, such as dedicated backup-to-disk appliances. With a software-defined approach datacenters can run on the industry-standard hardware they have already negotiated pricing for, know, and prefer.

BACKUP AS A SERVICE SUCCESS FOR MANAGED SERVICE PROVIDERS

Backup of mission-critical application servers has been one of those steady growth areas within IT for decades, but it rarely gets the attention it deserves. This function is vital to the very existence of the business.

It requires highly specialized technical skills that are in short supply, and precision in execution. That's why enterprises are turning to Managed Service Providers to deliver the complete end-to-end BaaS solution to protect their mission-critical servers with 3-2-1 backups. Enterprises large and small struggle to keep up daily backups and want to switch from tapes to touch-free automated backups that use remote, cloud-based storage to keep a second copy of the daily backups offsite – just in case.

WHAT IS BAAS?
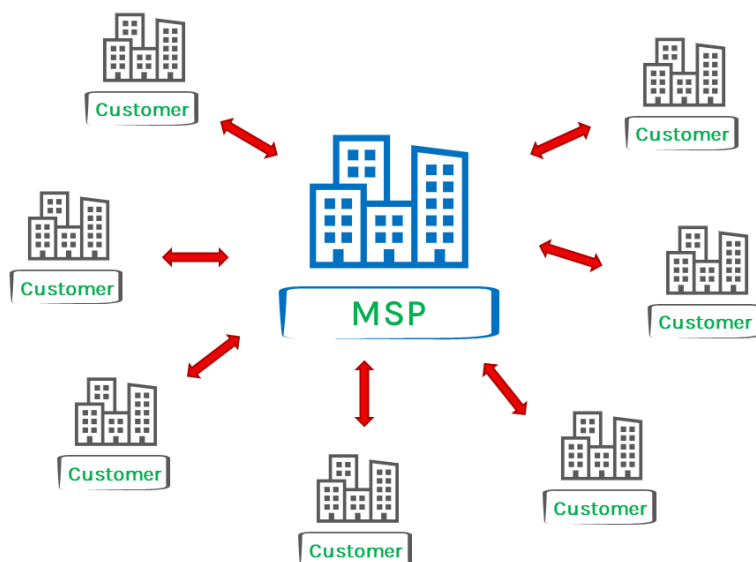
BaaS is delivered with a hub and spoke model. The MSP is at the hub, and the customer sites are each a spoke. It's important to capture backups on-premises at each customer site, data reduce them with deduplication and compression, encrypt them, and transmit an encrypted copy of the backup data to the MSP at the hub to protect it.

Each customer site may have different hardware vendors that they have standardized on, and there a variety of backup and restore vendors in use as well. Some sites are small branch offices, while other are huge datacenters. Ideally MSPs can deliver a BaaS offering that can accommodate these varied environments. Some MSPs prefer to store their customers encrypted data in the MSP datacenters, while others prefer to use cheap archive-level storage from AWS, Azure, IBM, and other public cloud providers.

WHAT DO MSPS NEED TO HAVE TO MAKE BAAS REALLY WORK?

Strong technical foundation: A strong technical foundation for the delivery of backup, data protection, and ransomware protection is essential. Each of these elements is necessary to succeed. Traditional backup and restore knowledge alone is no longer enough. It must be augmented by other data protection and ransomware protection services. Customers want these services now. They want reliable backups that won't get infected by ransomware and that can recover from any kind of event by restoring data promptly.

Varied SLAs: Therefore, MSPs must offer their customers backup services that stand firmly upon a solid technical foundation, one that can cope with a wide range of recovery point objectives (RPOs) and recovery time objectives (RTOs), accomplish restores from on-premises and cloud systems, and that offer the necessary security features and assurances.

Compatibility: The Baas solution must be compatible with existing operations including enterprise storage, compute servers, backup and restore software vendors, and application environments. Ideally, BaaS should utilize an efficient software-defined architecture to increase margins by optimizing the placement of gear at customer sites. Too much gear and profitability would evaporate; too little and performance suffers.

Business model: Obviously, higher margins can be realized with a cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all approach to BaaS. But most market segments contain within them an enormous number of variables. Customer needs vary greatly. Some want basic backup services while others want BaaS tied in with sophisticated data protection services. The MSP should opt for offerings that include the right amount of flexibility without tying up personnel hours by reinventing the wheel for every account.
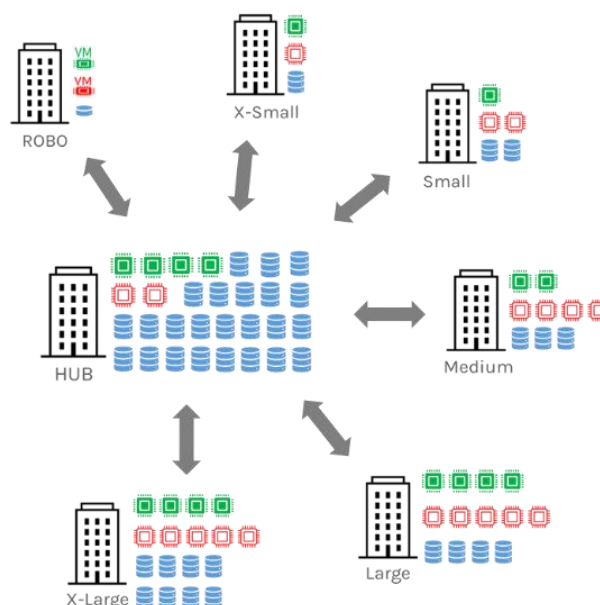
Tailor Fit: That's why BaaS services used by MSPs should avoid too much customization as this eliminates the economies of scale that can be realized. However, the chosen platform should enable MSPs to offer a certain amount of customization. Lengthy manual tailoring of BaaS solutions to fit customer needs can be eliminated if customization can be accomplished on an automated policy-basis.

A Responsive Process: Processes must be in place between the BaaS provider, the MSP, and their clients to seamlessly interact and address issues such as meeting SLAs and taking care of technical support speedily. This is best accomplished via dashboards that summarize backup and data protection actions, as well as comprehensive reporting.

As well as processes that streamline the MSP-customer relationship, similar processes should be in place between the technology provider of BaaS solutions and the MSP. These enable the MSP to proactively engage the technology vendor to eliminate inefficiencies, improve hardware utilization, automate SLAs, and increase margins.

By establishing the right technical foundation and aligning it with the appropriate business model and processes, the MSP is in a position to transform Backup-as-a-Service into a major profitability engine.

INTERNAL MANAGED SERVICE PROVIDERS

It is not uncommon, these days, for large organizations to set up their internal IT teams to act in a way that resembles an MSP i.e., they are in the business of delivering services to various lines of business within the organization. In such organizations, the above points very much apply. Success depends on offering a strong technical foundation, the right business model, and the most efficient processes. This internal service approach provides greater opportunity for growth, digital transformation, and economies of scale.

But moving from a traditional IT shop to this kind of service model can be difficult. Therefore, it makes sense to partner with those that possess proven migration capabilities that streamline the transition and enable a fast launch of this new mode of IT operations.

CHOOSE WISELY

The delivery of backup and data protection services is a much-needed area in IT right now – especially if they go beyond traditional backup to incorporate areas such as data protection and ransomware protection. But these services must be built on the right technology platform, with a cooperative and flexible provider using the right business model, and with processes in place to make it economically viable while customizing it for each customer's situation.

ABOUT FALCONSTOR SOFTWARE

FalconStor works closely with leading enterprises and MSPs around the globe to provide BaaS solutions that reduce the volume of data to be backed up by up to 95%, can store it on any SAN disk array, and provide offsite protection. With more than an exabyte of data under management at over 1000 enterprise customers and MSPs worldwide, FalconStor has forged strong technology partnerships with the leaders in backup, restore, and storage software.

Our flagship product, StorSafe can write to tape (LTO-9) for certain apps and certain data for long-term preservation and retention, depending on industry, regulations, or internal requirements. Thanks to this, MSPs working with FalconStor can now help customers who need support with their processes immediately without disrupting current plans but want to get disaster recovery and backup off their plate and outsource it to the MSP. Learn more at https://www.falconstor.com.