

10 ways Veeam Availability Orchestrator will improve your BC/DR strategy

Today's modern enterprise demands 24/7 IT services to power its non-stop business operations, however, as infrastructure becomes more complex and risks increase, failure and downtime is more likely.

To combat this, organizations must develop a fool-proof business continuity/disaster recovery (BC/DR) strategy that aligns desired business and technological requirements and outcomes. These outcomes should focus on mitigating risks and implementing practices to ensure the organization is as resilient and available as possible before, during and after outage.

However, developing a true BC/DR strategy is often considered complex, fraught with pitfalls, challenges and unknowns, making it seemingly impossible to plan, prepare and execute. But it does not need to be that way! Veeam® Availability Orchestrator – a powerful orchestration and automation engine – was purpose-built for BC/DR and drives the most value from your Veeam Backup & Replication™ or Veeam Availability Suite™ investment, making it an indispensable tool to your organization.

1. Achieve more aggressive RTOs

By orchestrating and automating the entire recovery process – whether it is a restore from a backup, failover, failback or planned migration – successfully resuming production services can be achieved far more quickly than manual methods. Orchestration and automation render lengthy, error-prone manual processes and workflows a thing of the past. Your entire data center can be recovered in as little as one-click, from shutting down source VMs, powering on multiple replica VMs in parallel, sequencing recoveries in perfect order, executing custom scripts, automatic re-IP of networks and more. Ultimately, your organization will be able to achieve the aggressive recovery time objectives (RTOs) demanded by the business.

2. More operationally efficient DR at scale

Veeam Availability Orchestrator enables you to be far more operationally efficient by allowing you to seamlessly scale and amend your recovery workflows as the production environment changes. Administrators have the power to perform restores, failovers and failbacks with one-click – whether it is a single application or the entire data center – while having the confidence of success as recovery workflows are automated, and have been tested and proven to work before a DR event. Veeam Availability Orchestrator also leverages VMware vSphere Tags or Veeam ONE™ Business View, so VMs are automatically included in orchestration plans as they are created without any further manual intervention. Administrators can also rest assured that their applications and data are automatically backed up and protected when in the failed-over state at the DR site with the use of Veeam Backup & Replication template jobs.

3. Perform true DR from Veeam backups

Traditionally, backup is not considered true DR as restores can be slow, have poor performance and are a labor-intensive process. Backup and DR typically complement one another, but infinite resources are not always available to replicate all applications, especially in smaller organizations. Veeam Availability Orchestrator brings advanced orchestration and automation to restores of Veeam backups, simplifying the entire recovery process, even when dealing with multiple restores at a time. Coupled with support for Instant VM Recovery® and dynamic restores that are automatically distributed to new recovery locations, users can achieve incredibly low RTOs that rival those of replication-based failover, even when replication is not available or cost-effective.

4. Reliably recover entire applications

With Veeam Availability Orchestrator, businesses are empowered to test and recover their environment at not just the VM layer, but at the application layer, too. Administrators can leverage multiple pre- and post-failover PowerShell scripts in their orchestration plans against specific VMs and applications to test and verify that they have been recovered correctly and are fully-functioning. Veeam Availability Orchestrator ships with plenty of out-of-the-box scripts for commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) software like Microsoft Exchange, Active Directory, SharePoint, SQL and IIS, ready to be leveraged with minimal configuration. However, there is no limit to the scripting possibilities, as any custom PowerShell scripts can be imported and executed as part of an orchestration plan. There's no limit to the number of scripts that can be run, allowing you to completely customize your DR experience.

5. Test more frequently and thoroughly

Frequent and thorough DR testing is not so much overlooked but unobtainable for many organizations due to the time and resources necessary to perform testing, as well as the potential risks it presents. Veeam Availability Orchestrator delivers multiple testing options and capabilities that make it simple to rigorously test the entire DR plan without impacting production systems or requiring the dedication of large amounts of personnel resources. Testing is fully-automated and is available on a recurring scheduled basis or on-demand in the form of automated Veeam DataLabs™ and Readiness Checks. With the flexible testing options available, you can prove the reliability of your recovery plans and bring confidence to the organization.

BONUS BENEFIT: Automated Veeam DataLabs are not just limited to recoverability verification. They can be left powered on and made easily available for multiple non-DR use cases, like testing application updates, patches and new software for more reliable development and testing, all against production-fresh data.

6. Proactively detect and remediate errors and SLO violations

If your recovery plan was going to fail or take too long and violate your service level objectives (SLOs), wouldn't you rather know ahead of time, so you can fix it before it is too late? Veeam Availability Orchestrator automatically produces rigorous reports on a recurring basis that contain detailed, actionable insights about every step of your plan. This includes areas where the plan has failed or taken too long so you can proactively remediate any issues, re-test and be certain that the plan conforms to all expectations in advance, ensuring more successful and timely recoveries in real-world events. Reports can also be automatically sent to key stakeholders, such as application owners, so everyone is always aware of the state of their application's plan and status.

7. Automatically prove compliance

Internal and external compliance regulations often shape an organization's recovery plan, like the method of data protection used, how long it should be kept for, the maximum amount of downtime allowed, etc. Veeam Availability Orchestrator not only helps you build and test a plan against these requirements, but also features rigorous reporting and dynamic documentation that's completely customizable and automatically created, updated and published as the environment changes. This makes it possible to assure compliance has been met for past and present plans, tests and recoveries, whether that's to executives, auditors or regulations like SOX, GDPR and HIPAA.

8. Delegate DR resources and responsibilities

Veeam Availability Orchestrator's powerful permission scheme makes it easy to delegate access to application owners, business units and operation teams. Each team is granted secure access to resources and planning for their specific applications since they understand them best. Best of all, they do not need any knowledge of Veeam Backup & Replication to create, test, document and execute orchestration plans as Veeam Availability Orchestrator utilizes a simple, wizard-driven approach that takes no more than 10 minutes to complete.

9. Access DR resources anywhere

Veeam Availability Orchestrator features a powerful, streamlined HTML5 interface to provide the best user experience and streamlined operations. This also means that Veeam Availability Orchestrator users can access their DR environment and orchestration plans at any time, any place and on any device, as long as they have an internet connection.

10. Integrate into existing workflows and applications

Veeam Availability Orchestrator is capable of integrating into your environment easily, including adding it to existing applications and workflows. The RESTful API — easily evaluated with the Swagger UI — allows you to take advantage of activities like executing failovers and failbacks or orchestration plans directly from the tools and platforms your teams are used to using.