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BOAB IT Recovers Files after Ransomware Attack, Saves Client Thousands of Dollars

"We would have been in real trouble had BOAB IT not configured SkyKick to protect our data. We would have likely had to pay the $6,000 ransom, with no guarantee of getting our data unencrypted."

Practice Manager at law firm

Situation

In October 2016, a customer of BOAB IT fell victim to a ransomware attack, reporting that a mailbox and over 44,000 files on SharePoint totaling over 5 GB of data were locked down. This was accompanied by a ransom request of over $6,000 USD for the key to unencrypt the files.

Due to the costs of restoring that much data and the resulting weeks of lost productivity, for many companies, paying the ransom is usually the only viable option. Fortunately, BOAB IT was using SkyKick Cloud Backup to protect the customer's Office 365 data.

Solution

Several months before the ransomware attack on the law firm, BOAB IT deployed Cloud Backup to protect the law firm's Office 365 data. With the data securely backed up to Azure, the pre-attack versions of the files were untouched by the malware, and were available for restoration. Additionally, because Cloud Backup identifies and stores all versions of files, not just the most recent, every pre-attack version of every file could be restored.

Benefits

By successfully recovering all the compromised data, BOAB IT delivered the following value to their customer.

• Ransom payment savings of over $6,000 USD

• No need to recreate any versions of the 44,000 encrypted files

• Minimal productivity loss due to speed of data recovery

• Peace of mind knowing their data is truly protected

• Solidified partnership between BOAB IT and their client

"BOAB IT continues to rely more and more on a partnership with SkyKick to protect its customers and their important data."

Nicholas Carr, Managing Director, BOAB IT

BOAB IT

Partner: BOAB IT delivers all the cloud technology products and services that law firms and other small businesses require for a fixed monthly cost.

Website: www.boabit.com.au

Country: Australia

Customers: BOAB IT clientele includes over 700 law firms.

Ransomware: A form of malware that encrypts files, making them inaccessible. The attacker demands a ransom for the key to unencrypt the files, leaving businesses with the choice of either recreating all the files or paying the ransom.

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Situation

BOAB IT started in late 2012 when Managing Director, Nicholas Carr, continued finding small law firms were struggling to get the technology solutions and support they needed. His vision was to deliver all of the technology products and services law firms and other small businesses require for a fixed monthly cost.

BOAB IT currently has over 700 law firms as clients, and regularly contributes articles and presentations related to technology and the law for various legal publications and events

In October 2016, one of their customers fell victim to a ransomware attack. They reported to BOAB IT that a mailbox and over 44,000 files on SharePoint totaling over 5 GB of data were locked down with a ransom request of over $6,000 USD for the key to unencrypt the files.

Ransomware is a type of malware that encrypts files on a computer, a server, or even in the cloud, making them inaccessible. The attacker then demands a ransom for the key to unencrypt the files. This leaves victim businesses with the choice of either recreating all of the files or paying the ransom and rewarding organized crime, or even terror organizations.

The cost for an average engineering department to rebuild 20 MB of data has been estimated to be approximately $100,000, and the estimated time to restore the files is at least three weeks[1]. That would make the estimated cost of recovering this

client's 5 GB of files in the millions of dollars, not including the cost of the lost productivity during the restoration process. Thus, without a backup solution, paying the ransom would be the only viable option.

Fortunately, BOAB IT was using SkyKick Cloud Backup to protect the customer's Office 365 data. Cloud Backup performs multiple daily backups of Office 365 data and securely stores all versions of files in Azure. Thus, all versions of client's files that were stored before the attack could be restored.

Solution

Backup Solution Required for SharePoint

In 2014, BOAB IT shifted their business to deliver 100% of their services via the cloud. This included using SharePoint for their clients' data storage. At the time, the leading backup technology providers did not have a solution that would easily integrate with SharePoint without requiring significant infrastructure to support all of BOAB IT's customers.

According to Nicolas Carr, Managing Director at BOAB IT, "In addition to needing an easily integrated backup solution for SharePoint, we also needed the ability to embed the solution into our portal via APIs. This was a critical requirement to ensure backup and restore events wouldn't drain support resources."

The Choice for Cloud Backup

BOAB IT was introduced to SkyKick by

"There were lots of hoops and a lot more steps with other solutions. Cloud Backup requires just a few fields and a few clicks to get started. From easy setup and autodiscovery to the ease of managing multiple subscriptions, we felt Cloud Backup offered the best value."

Nicholas Carr, Managing Director, BOAB IT

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[1]Risk Analysis and the Security Survey by James F. Broder, CPP. Feb 22, 2006

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Microsoft in late 2014, and after six months of trialing the platform with multiple clients, BOAB IT chose to standardize on Cloud Backup as their Office 365 backup solution.

Easy Setup

The simplicity of the setup process, including the comprehensive discovery of users and content was a key factor in the selection for Cloud Backup. Carr states, "There were lots of hoops and a lot more steps with other solutions. Cloud Backup requires just a few fields and a few clicks to get started."

Automatic Discovery of New Users and Content

Cloud Backup runs a discovery with every backup to uncover any new users or content. It also offers the option to automatically enable those mailboxes, site collections, and OneDrive for Business accounts to the subscription. According to Carr, "We want to ensure that our clients are always fully protected. This feature provides that coverage without requiring any effort on our part to update the subscription manually."

Easy to Manage and Support

When selecting products to include in a managed service, it is critical to consider not only the cost of the product itself, but also the cost to manage and support the product. Carr states, "From easy setup and auto-enable to the ease of managing multiple subscriptions, we felt Cloud Backup offered the best value."

API Integration

BOAB IT is building a custom portal through

which their clients can access multiple technology solutions through a single UI. Their selection of Cloud Backup was therefore influenced by the availability of SkyKick APIs which enable partners to customize, integrate, and extend into their technology stack. These APIs will allow BOAB IT to deliver the functionality of Cloud Backup, including customer self-service, as a component of their managed service offering and through an interface familiar to their customers.

Storage Location

SkyKick Cloud Backup offers partners a variety of storage options. These include multiple Azure data centers around the world, including one in Australia. This was critical for the primary clientele of BOAB IT. Legal firms in Australia are required by the Privacy Act 1988 of Australia to ensure that both active and backed up client data are located in Australia, under Australian jurisdiction.

Cloud Backup Provides Recovery from Ransomware Attack

When BOAB IT learned that one of their clients with Cloud Backup had become a victim of ransomware, they contacted SkyKick to pursue a restoration of the customer's data to a state prior to the attack. Because the data was securely backed up to Azure, the pre-attack versions of the files were untouched and available for restoration.

Additionally, due to the version of ransomware (CryptoWall) and the unique

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process Cloud Backup uses when backing up versions of documents, restoring the data was simplified and could be done more accurately. Cloud Backup identifies and stores all versions of files. This made it easy to restore not only the most recent versions of files, but all versions that were backed up prior to the attack.

According to Carr, "Dealing with the team at SkyKick to resolve this and other data issues is always straightforward. For this incident, we were looking for the fastest restoration possible and subsequently raised the issue with the SkyKick team and were provided the necessary assistance to have the client back up and running very quickly."

Benefits

By successfully recovering all the compromised data, BOAB IT delivered incredible value to their customer.

Ransom payment savings

Due to the estimated millions of dollars to rebuild all of the encrypted files, and the additional lost productivity during the restoration, the Practice Manager at the law firm stated, "We would have been in real trouble had BOAB IT not configured SkyKick to protect our data. We would have likely had to pay the $6,000 ransom, with no guarantee of getting our data unencrypted."

Minimal productivity loss

The speed by which the data was recovered by SkyKick minimized lost productivity. Additionally, because all versions of files

(not just the latest) were restored, no data from those previous versions needed to be re-created.

Peace of mind

The successful recovery from the ransomware attack has provided peace of mind to the client, BOAB IT, and all their clients, knowing that their SharePoint data is protected, and can be restored with minimal impact to their business.

Solidified partnerships

This experience solidified the business relationship between BOAB IT and their client, and reinforced the partnership between BOAB IT and SkyKick. Carr concludes, "BOAB IT continues to rely more and more on a partnership with SkyKick to protect its customers and their important data."