

SHOWCASE

Overcoming Ransomware Attacks for Midsize Companies with Hitachi Vantara

Date: January 2023 **Author:** Christophe Bertrand, Practice Director

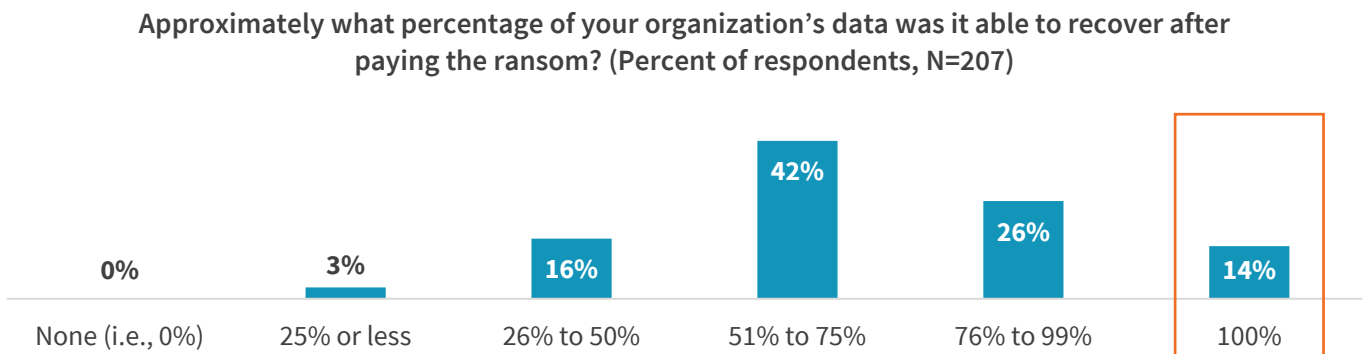
ABSTRACT: To successfully defend against ransomware attacks, midsize companies require data protection strategies and enterprise-level solutions that are affordable, easy to use, and simple to deploy. Storage vendors are in a position to contribute their expertise and resources, offering integrated data protection solutions that establish a foundation for more cyber-resilient infrastructures. Hitachi Vantara’s portfolio delivers advanced features that are effective in delivering the much-needed cyber-protection capabilities midsize organizations require.

Market Landscape

To commit their nefarious deeds, cybercriminals follow the data. It should be no surprise that storage repositories on premises or in the cloud are the most common ransomware targets. And while midsize companies have smaller attack surfaces, they face additional threats related to misconfigurations, software code, and IT resource limitations. A cyber-resilient infrastructure that protects data in all its forms is a critical must-have for midsize organizations, and cost-optimized solutions are all the more relevant.

Research from TechTarget’s Enterprise Strategy Group notes that more than half (56%) of targeted organizations have paid a ransom demand,¹ and today such expenditures have become the cost of doing business. However, paying a ransom doesn’t guarantee data recovery: As shown in Figure 1, only one in seven (14%) surveyed organizations that paid a ransom recovered 100% of their data.

Figure 1. Paying Ransom Doesn’t Guarantee Data Recovery



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

¹ Source: Enterprise Strategy Group Research Report, [The Long Road Ahead to Ransomware Preparedness](#), June 2022. All Enterprise Strategy Group research references and charts in this showcase are from this research report.

This Enterprise Strategy Group Showcase was commissioned by Hitachi Vantara and is distributed under license from TechTarget, Inc.

While one-third of companies plan to spend more on ransomware preparedness, midsize companies often face budget constraints and are particularly vulnerable to attack due to lack of readiness.

In fact, smaller organizations are less confident in their overall preparedness, on average, than their enterprise counterparts. Enterprise Strategy Group research shows that only 20% of midsize companies are confident in their ransomware preparedness. The ability to effectively respond to an incident is key in the battle against ransomware, and midsize companies need help to lay the proper groundwork. In an era of heightened potential for attacks, data protection solutions that are merely good enough are not an option.

The absence of C-suite involvement as stakeholders in ransomware preparedness programs compared to large enterprises (28% versus 42%) offers IT professionals in midsize organizations an opportunity to discuss the relevance of integrated storage protection (and features that improve overall preparedness and response) with their executive teams. This is an area in which we also expect that vendors can help “educate” the market.

The lack of skill sets and IT resources, along with limited tools, leads to deficiencies in incident response strategies, with only 34% of midsize organizations having a well-defined incident response strategy that has been thoroughly tested and executed in response to an attack, compared to 49% in the enterprise segment.

In terms of ransomware recovery, among the top ten requirements for organizations are the abilities to recover to any point or location, to detect ransomware in data copies/backups, and to protect VMs/integrated cloud copies.

In the current threat environment, it is our view that midsize companies can improve storage protections through a combination of best practices, optimized infrastructure, and robust security protocols (immutable backups, air gapping, etc.). With these in place, midsize organizations can achieve the same level of data protection as large enterprises.

Key Technologies to Consider

Just like any enterprise, midsize companies require solutions that instill confidence that their data copies and volumes are immutable and that backups are securely locked up. However, their ability to reach these goals can potentially be complicated by the lack of IT skill sets and limitations in budgets and security spending—all the more reason to make integrated, cost-effective storage protection solutions available to every business.

Enterprise Strategy Group research points out that air gapping data copies is one of the top four most common planned methods of recovery for applications and data impacted by ransomware attacks, and since midsize companies are less likely to say this control plays a critical role in protecting their organization against ransomware (5% versus 14%), it represents a key area for storage vendors to contribute their expertise and resources. Fortunately, according to Enterprise Strategy Group research, 18% of midsize companies (versus 7% of enterprises) plan to implement granular restores, and this represents another opportunity where data protection and storage vendors can help.

Protecting the protector is the new norm—the backup infrastructure is vital to combat ransomware, and Enterprise Strategy Group research finds that 49% of organizations take extra measures to protect backup copies. Given the nature of the ransomware threat and the volumes of data that midsize companies accrue, there’s a critical need to evolve to more automated and integrated processes.

By deploying an integrated protection solution, midsize companies can gain a holistic view of all data, eliminate IT and storage silos, and accelerate implementation of key prevention methodologies, including data immutability, air gapping, anomaly detection, and forensics. That’s where Hitachi can help.

The Hitachi Storage Solution for Ransomware Protection and Cyber Resiliency

Facing a unique set of challenges, midsize organizations require the right storage protection tools because a successful ransomware attack can inflict severe, long-lasting financial and operational damage.

Offering a best practice that once was available only for more advanced enterprises, Hitachi applies advanced technology that's easy to use, enabling midsize customers to deploy storage solutions that grow as resource and business needs change.

Hitachi Ops Center offers unified management, enabling customers to set security layers and apply immutability, air gapping, and anomaly detection either to on-premises storage arrays or to remote, replicated environments. Customers can optimize data center operations through integrated configuration, analytics, automation, and copy data management.

In terms of enhanced data storage analysis and protection, Ops Center Analyzer offers early threat detection and ransomware mitigation from a virtual machine to the bits and bytes of data on a disk. It provides an ML-driven approach that learns a customer's storage environment and searches 24/7 for anomalous activity.

The Ops Center Protector is a data management platform offering built-in, comprehensive data protection. Protector enables users to simply create and manage complex, business-defined policies that will meet service-level objectives for availability, recoverability, and retention.

In addition, immutability controls can be applied and managed by the Hitachi Data Retention Utility software.

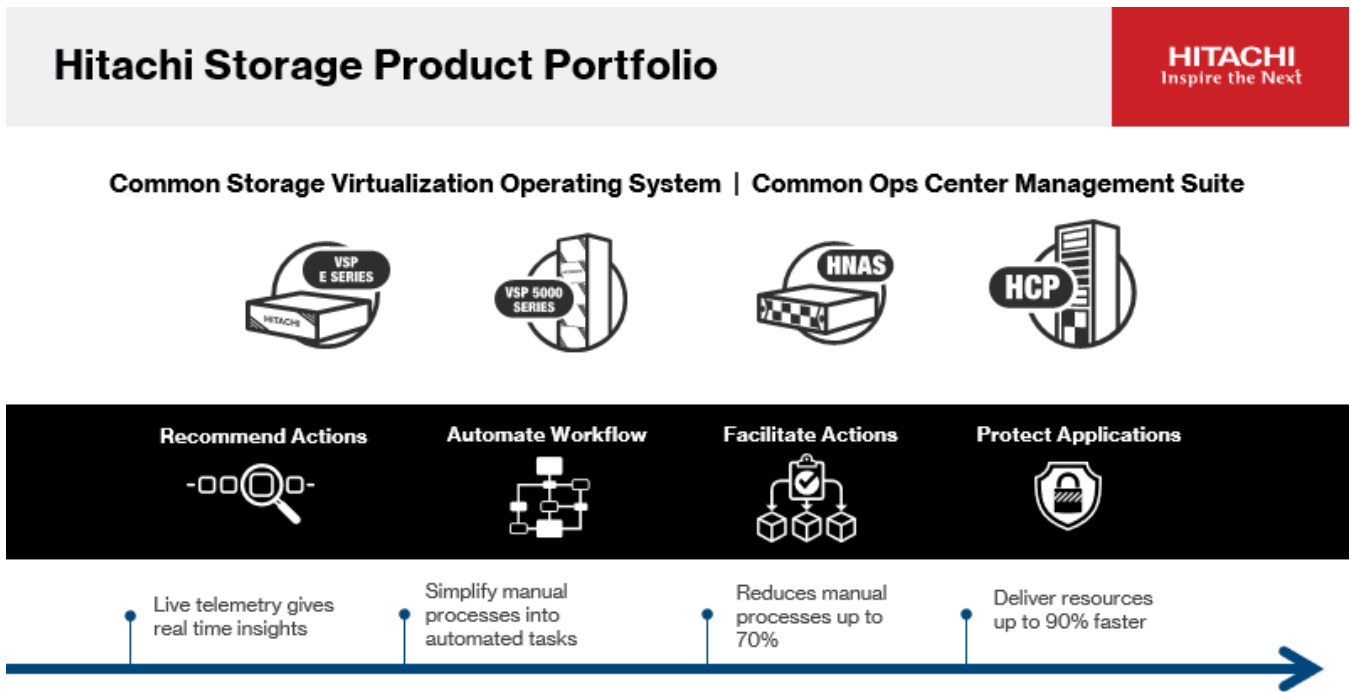
Ops Center Administrator unifies storage operations to enable rapid configuration of new data services. It offers an accessible, centralized administrative console for point-and-click storage management operations based on best practices and seamless migrations of workloads at any time.

Hitachi Virtual Storage Platform (VSP) E series is designed for midsize companies with data and management silos, ensuring that migrations to next-gen technology will be seamless. It is bundled with the Hitachi Ops Center management capabilities described above to provide a complete platform solution for ransomware protection. The platform uses storage virtualization for increased performance and resiliency and the elimination of all data management silos. With the Virtual Storage Platform, users can manage storage as a virtual pool, track capacity, and inherit all the latest Hitachi storage management features to extend the life of existing storage assets.

Customers can purchase a controller and then scale it at a later time. They also have capabilities to restore from immutable copies, systems, or storage snapshots when they choose (see Figure 2).

Providing an array of applications for enterprise-level security and data protection, Hitachi storage protection also includes an ecosystem of industry-leading backup and mitigation partners so that midsize organizations can benefit from the most advanced cyber-resilient capabilities.

Figure 2. Hitachi's Cyber Resiliency Approach



Source: Hitachi Vantara

Hitachi offers a range of integrated data replication and protection technologies to address stringent data resiliency requirements for data repurposing, disaster recovery, and business continuity. Ultimately, smaller technology buyers don't have to settle for a solution that's "good enough" or be unprepared for ransomware attacks because enterprise-class cyber-resiliency for the midsize organization is now accessible through Hitachi.

The Bigger Truth

While all businesses are confronting the same levels of ransomware risk, the consequences for midsize companies can be severe. Today's storage vendors represent key enablers for a range of data protection needs.

Why settle for "good enough"? When it comes to cyber resilience, it's a risky choice. That's why picking an enterprise-level storage solution to provide controls to lock up data, establish always-on monitoring, and protect against key midmarket vulnerabilities at an affordable price point is key. Adoption of preventative security controls through a single solution augments data encryption and anonymization, provides key Identity and access controls (MFA, PAM, etc.), and ensures that immutable and indelible backup copies are systematic and consistent.

Midsize companies need easy-to-use controls and deployments to apply data protections, lock up on-premises storage arrays, or treat remote, replicated environments as air-gapped solutions, but only one-third of organizations currently air-gap their data, so the need exists and the potential for adoption is strong.

By engaging with an established storage vendor that offers integrated solution controls for protecting data storage, as well as an ecosystem of third-party support, midmarket leaders can gain effective cyber-protection capabilities that both meet cost targets and dramatically improve their storage security postures.

For midsize organizations looking to enhance their cyber-resilience and ransomware preparedness posture, Enterprise Strategy Group recommends taking a close look at Hitachi Vantara's proven cyber-resilience solutions.

All product names, logos, brands, and trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Information contained in this publication has been obtained by sources TechTarget, Inc. considers to be reliable but is not warranted by TechTarget, Inc. This publication may contain opinions of TechTarget, Inc., which are subject to change. This publication may include forecasts, projections, and other predictive statements that represent TechTarget, Inc.'s assumptions and expectations in light of currently available information. These forecasts are based on industry trends and involve variables and uncertainties. Consequently, TechTarget, Inc. makes no warranty as to the accuracy of specific forecasts, projections or predictive statements contained herein.


This publication is copyrighted by TechTarget, Inc. Any reproduction or redistribution of this publication, in whole or in part, whether in hard-copy format, electronically, or otherwise to persons not authorized to receive it, without the express consent of TechTarget, Inc., is in violation of U.S. copyright law and will be subject to an action for civil damages and, if applicable, criminal prosecution. Should you have any questions, please contact Client Relations at cr@esg-global.com.



Enterprise Strategy Group is an integrated technology analysis, research, and strategy firm that provides market intelligence, actionable insight, and go-to-market content services to the global IT community.

 www.esg-global.com

 contact@esg-global.com

 508.482.0188