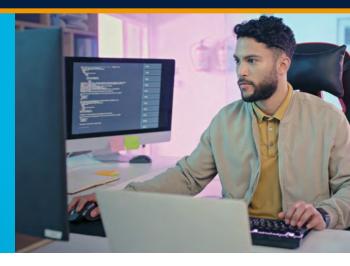eBRIEF ————

Beyond the Big Three: Protecting the SaaS-Powered Workplace

Beyond the Big 3: Protecting the SaaS-Powered Workplace

The typical organization's SaaS backup strategy most likely has some missing pieces in this very important puzzle.

Despite backing up widely-adopted apps, many departmental daily-use apps often go unprotected. With the average mid-market organization using upwards of 100 SaaS apps, not understanding the company's full SaaS footprint can lead to significant costs.

In 2022,

43%

of businesses introduced new apps that stored sensitive data.

The rise of the SaaS-powered workplace has led to unprecedented levels of SaaS adoption, necessitating heightened security measures. According to Better Cloud's 2023 State of SaaS Ops report, in 2022, 43% of businesses introduced new apps that stored sensitive data. Even with this rapid expansion and the abundance of confidential, high-value data stored in the cloud, many organizations and their outsourced technology providers continue to choose SaaS backup solutions that cover only a few widely used applications. Commonly protected apps are limited to "*The Big Three*": Microsoft 365, Google Workspace, and Salesforce. This approach leaves numerous other critical apps unprotected.

At first glance, this approach makes sense. Microsoft 365 is reported to have 345 million paid seats. Google Workspace has more than 9 million paying organizations. Salesforce, according to this LinkedIn blog, is used by more than 150,000 enterprises worldwide. Those are big numbers, but they hardly represent the large number of SaaS apps in use.

For instance, Microsoft 365 may be used across the entire organization, but the next most-used SaaS apps (most likely storing sensitive data) will hardly be the same as the IT department, marketing, or the CFO's office. What's more, which data is considered business-critical is siloed within different departments.

That can leave vast amounts of high-value data overlooked. Data that's not backed up is at real risk of being lost from data mistakes (such as those caused by human error), vendor outages, and malicious attacks.

DevOps and IT: Business-Critical Seats

An app may not have many seats in use, but that has little effect on its critical function in a company. Consider, for example, the use of SaaS apps within DevOps. No doubt the number of users of Microsoft 365 outnumber those of Jira and Confluence users in most organizations. However, those smaller numbers of seats/usage in DevOps of Jira are just as critical.

Imagine a small DevOps team at a large financial institution that uses Jira for project management and Confluence for knowledge sharing. Their work on a critical transaction system directly impacts the company's revenue. Jira tickets track their work, while Confluence documents their systems and processes.

An unexpected data loss in these SaaS applications could lead to delays, confusion, and potentially result in failed transactions, financial losses — and even reputational damage.

Of course, there are more than just those two tools used by IT and DevOps teams. The company Productiv, which describes itself as a SaaS management platform, since 2021 has been producing an annual report tracking its customers' usage of SaaS apps. For IT and Security Departments, Productive identified these as top SaaS vendors:

- Atlassian Cloud
- Lucidchart
- Salesforce
- Jira Software

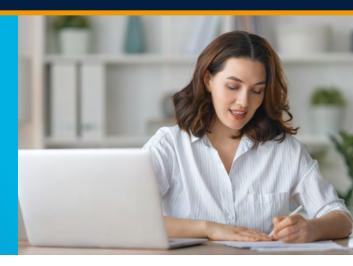- DocuSign
- LinkedIn
- Confluence
- Figma

- Jamf Pro
- Miro

SOURCE: PRODUCTIV, STATE OF SAAS SERIES (2023)

Marketing: Data-Driven Growth Marketing Needs

Marketing departments may use many different tools that touch on different subsets of marketing tasks: SEO, lead generation, social media content and scheduling, analytics, optimization, customer journey, and email campaign creation (to name a few).

One of the major players in this space, HubSpot CRM, says 194,000 companies use its solution. HubSpot sits at the intersection of several key marketing functions: customer relationship management (CRM) and lead generation from inbound marketing. HubSpot is most often utilized by companies with 10–50 employees and $1M–10M dollars in revenue, representing a huge slice of the SMB market.

HubSpot, in an article updated in 2023, identified "30+ SaaS Companies & Products To Watch." The article included a list of what HubSpot termed top B2B SaaS companies. Though a bit self-serving (HubSpot ranks in No. 1), it's an interesting list. Making it into the top ten are:

- HubSpot
- Monday
- Survey Monkey
- Microsoft (PowerPoint)
- Asana
- SAP Concur
- MailChimp
- Shopify
- Slack
- Adobe

For businesses that operate on a data-driven approach to marketing, losing SaaS marketing solution data can mean interrupted campaigns, content posting, and lead generation — potentially leading to missed opportunities.

Customer Support Needs Support Too

For other departments, there are plenty of popular applications found outside of "The Big Three." If a company needs customer support functions, there are many SaaS vendors providing solutions. According to a blog from cloud cost intelligence platform CloudZero, the four highest revenue-earning companies in the customer support space are:

- ServiceNow
- Twilio
- Zendesk
- Qualtrics

Even though its user totals may not equal those of Microsoft, a provider such as Zendesk still has impressive reach in the market. According to this MarketSplash article, Zendesk has more than 160,000 business accounts across 150 countries (more than Salesforce) and its software handles more than 1 billion customer support requests each year.

For an enterprise that heavily relies on customer support apps, losing customer support data can be a disaster. Without access to customer support data or tickets, agents may struggle to provide efficient and personalized support to customers. They may need to ask repetitive questions or lack context about previous interactions, leading to frustration and dissatisfaction among customers. Loss of customer data can also trigger regulatory fines due to the many legal protections of customer privacy.

Accounting Also Counts

It is almost impossible to comprehend how accounting was accomplished before the digital age. It's no surprise, then, that among the biggest SaaS vendors outside of "**The Big Three**" are accounting SaaS apps.

PCMag recently created its list of "*The Best Accounting Software for Small Businesses in 2024*" (nearly all are SaaS):

- FreshBooks
- Intuit QuickBooks Online
- Zero

- Wave
- Zoho Books

- Sage 50 Accounting
- Patriot Software Accounting

The top two SaaS apps (FreshBooks and Intuit QuickBooks Online) are used by companies of many sizes. While FreshBooks tends to be popular with smaller companies, according to this article from Forbes Advisor, Intuit QuickBooks Online is more popular with small and medium-sized businesses.

Here, too, failure to back up accounting data has disastrous results. Missing key accounting data can impede or halt the processing of supplier invoices and even paychecks for employees.

Summing Up: More Apps, More Backup

Many companies operate under the misconception that their SaaS data is fully backed up by vendors, failing to recognize the implications of the Shared Responsibility Model. In this model, while vendors secure the cloud infrastructure, data preservation is the organization's responsibility. Even aware companies may only protect a few popular SaaS apps, like Microsoft 365.

Companies that bridge this protection gap and secure backups for all SaaS data will enhance their security in numerous ways. Complete control over all company-created data ensures rapid recovery during data emergencies and compliance with regulatory data retention and privacy laws. Those achieving true data sovereignty are better equipped to tackle any data challenges that arise.

About SaaSAssure

Total control over data, or data sovereignty, solves many problems. However, backing up the fast-growing mountain of data from SaaS apps is a daunting task. Partial solutions only paper over the need for future work. What's needed is a way to close data gaps, keep up with data growth, and even make comprehensive backups stable and secure not just now but in the future. SaaSAssure helps businesses of all sizes accomplish that.

Scan the QR code to learn more about our secure SaaS backup platform.

Join the forefront of SaaS data protection with SaaSAssure.

SaaSAssure^{SM}