Four Ways to Achieve Quick Wins in the Cloud

More companies than ever want to use the cloud as part of their overall IT strategy. To do so, they often look to achieve some quick wins in the cloud to demonstrate its value. Achieving these quick wins also serves to give them some practical hands on experience in the cloud. Incorporating the cloud into your backup and disaster recovery (DR) processes may serve as the best way to get these wins.

Any company hoping to get some quick wins in the cloud should first define what a "win" looks like. For the purposes of this blog entry, a win consists of:

- Fast, easy deployments of cloud resources
- Minimal IT staff involvement
- Improved application processes or workflows
- The same or lower costs

Here are four ways for companies to achieve the quick wins in the cloud through their backup and DR processes:

#1 — Take a Non-disruptive Approach

When possible, leverage your company's existing backup infrastructure to store copies of data in the cloud. All enterprise backup products such as backup software and

deduplication backup appliances, save one or two, interface with public clouds. These products can store backup data in the cloud without disrupting your existing environment.

Using these products, companies can get exposure to the public cloud's core compute and storage services. These are the cloud services companies are most apt to use initially and represent the most mature of the public cloud offerings.

#2 – Deduplicate Backup Data Whenever Possible

Public cloud providers charge monthly for every GB of data that companies store in their respective clouds. The more data that your company stores in the cloud, the higher these charges become.

Deduplicating data reduces the amount of data that your company stores in the cloud. In so doing, it also helps to control and reduce your company's monthly cloud storage costs.

#3 – Tier Your Backup Data

Many public cloud storage providers offer multiple tiers of storage. The default storage tier they offer does not, however, represent their most cost-effective option. This is designed for data that needs high levels of availability and moderate levels of performance.

Backup data tends to only need these features for the first 24 – 72 hours after it is backed up. After that, companies can often move it to lower cost tiers of cloud storage. Note that these lower cost tiers of storage come with decreasing levels of availability and performance. While many backups (over 99%) fall into this category, check to see if any application recoveries occurred that required data over three days old before moving it to lower tiers of storage.

#4 – Actively Manage Your Cloud Backup Environment

Applications and data residing in the cloud differ from your production environment in one important way. Every GB of data consumed and every hour that an application runs incur costs. This differs from on-premises environments where all existing hardware represents a sunk cost. As such, there is less incentive to actively manage existing hardware resources since any resources recouped only represent a "soft" savings.

This does not apply in the cloud. Proactively managing and conserving cloud resources translate into real savings. To realize these savings, companies need to look to products such as Quest [Foglight](). It helps them track where their backup data resides in the cloud and identify the application processes they have running. This, in turn, helps them manage and control their cloud costs.

Companies rightfully want to adopt the cloud for the many benefits that it offers and, ideally, achieve a quick win in the process. Storing backup data in the cloud and moving DR processes to the cloud provides the quick win in the cloud that many companies initially seek. As they do so, they should also ensure they put the appropriate processes and software in place to manage and control their usage of cloud resources.