



# FROM RANSOMWARE TO RESILIENCE

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How IT leaders kept their businesses running  
with AI-powered data security



# Ransomware readiness is more urgent than ever

Ransomware is the fastest-growing type of cybercrime.

Gartner reported by 2025, 75% of IT organizations would face one or more attacks. And every time a cybercriminal succeeds, the organization is damaged—financially and often reputationally. By 2031, ransomware is expected to attack a business, customer, or device every two seconds, costing victims around \$265 billion annually, according to Cybersecurity Ventures. No industry is immune. Despite concerted efforts to thwart ransomware attacks, businesses can't let their guard down—and here's why. Cybercriminals are innovative. They continue to create new attack vectors. And their attacks are becoming more frequent, more sophisticated, and more targeted. But though the contours of each attack may be unique, attackers all have the same goal: to disrupt business operations so victims will pay to restore order.

With so much at stake, enterprises must evolve their security posture—and start prioritizing data security along with perimeter and access security.



## True preparedness must also include:

- Reducing the attack surface
- Planning and practicing your response through tabletop exercises
- Determining how you'll know what data was compromised and the risk level to contain potential damage
- Increasing visibility across all data environments—because you can't secure data you can't see or manage

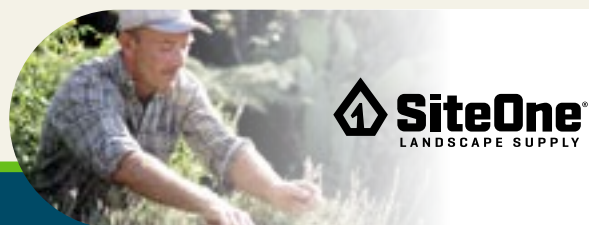
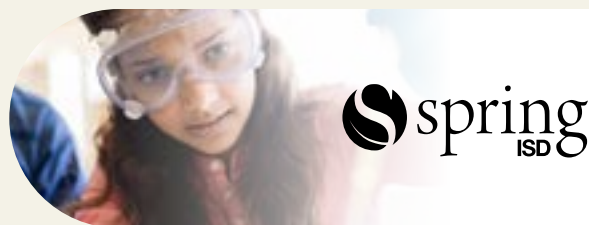
When it comes to ransomware readiness, being proactive is key.

1. "Minimize Risk by Better Knowing and Managing Your Data," Gartner IT Infrastructure, Operations & Cloud Strategies Conference, Nov 2022

# Hear from customers, security partners, and leading security experts

Fortunately, there ARE best practices and solutions to improve your security posture—and perhaps even defeat cybercriminals.

We're the leading AI-powered data security company delivering comprehensive resilience solutions to customers worldwide. And we'd like you to hear directly from those we serve.



In this eBook, our customers describe:



Their experiences with  
ransomware attacks



Their insights into the  
anatomy of a breach



How they recovered  
successfully



How they strengthened  
their security posture  
for the future

Finally, you'll hear from partners in our [Data Security Alliance](#) and the Cohesity Security Advisory Council. These experts—a true 'who's who' of cybersecurity—highlight key ways to win the war on ransomware.



**INDUSTRY:** EDUCATION

**LOCATION:** HOUSTON, TX

**FOUNDED:** 1935

# School district's prep **pays off**

## **BACKGROUND:**

Like school districts everywhere, Houston-area Spring Independent School District (ISD) has been strengthening defenses against growing cybersecurity threats.

"We block 1.4 million attacks every month, do regular vulnerability and penetration testing, and offer year-round cybersecurity training to staff," says Bobby LaFleur, director of Application Support.

Plus, a neighboring Houston school district was hit by a disruptive ransomware attack in March 2020 and paid over \$200,000 in ransom.

Spring ISD didn't want to suffer the same fate.





## THE ATTACK:

In November, LaFleur's vigilance and preparation paid off.

"We got a call around 8:00 p.m. about errors occurring in our systems we were using during the pandemic," LaFleur said. When IT engineers recognized that file servers were being encrypted, LaFleur and his colleagues rushed to the office to temporarily shut down the network.

## THE RECOVERY:

Fortunately, Spring ISD had recently made an important switch.

They'd previously used multiple backup products: Veeam and Idera, two different server platforms, with the whole setup replicated in a nearby co-location facility used for disaster recovery. But when the co-lo lease had come up for renewal, the IT team turned to us. Our backups in the data center locations are immutable, preventing attackers' attempts to encrypt or delete them. "If any virtual machine or SQL Server is encrypted in an attack," LaFleur says, "we can instantly restore a snapshot to any point in time."

When the attack hit, the Cohesity data security and management platform was already in place. Spring ISD had stored one immutable copy of virtual machines (VMs) and databases on-premises and another on AWS. The day after the attack, even before school started, the IT team had already restored its Active Directory servers and critical learning servers. Finance and the Student Information Systems were restored within two days. No disruption to learning. No impact on payroll. No ransom paid. The remaining 200 servers—mostly secondary systems—were brought back online in a planned manner.

**"Ransomware protection helped us get favorable rates when we renewed and increased our cybersecurity insurance. When peers in other school districts ask what we use for data protection, I tell them it's Cohesity—and I'm very satisfied with our chosen partner!"**

**Bobby LaFleur**, director of Application Support, Spring Independent School District



“After the ransomware attack, Cohesity really saved the district. Though our local Active Directory servers were locked up, preventing us from restoring data from the local backup, we were able to quickly restore critical servers from Cohesity backups in AWS. Teachers taught online classes the very next day as usual, and we didn’t miss payroll.”

**Bobby LaFleur**

Director of Application Support  
Spring Independent School District



#### THE RESULTS:



**\$0 ransom  
paid**



**100% recovery**



**Favorable  
cybersecurity  
insurance rates**



**INDUSTRY:** HEALTHCARE

**LOCATION:** KLAMATH FALLS, OR

**FOUNDED:** 1968

# Data security and recovery **can save lives**

## **BACKGROUND:**

Sky Lakes Medical Center is a not-for-profit teaching hospital serving more than 80,000 people in south-central Oregon and northern California.

As the renewal of its aging Commvault backup product neared, the Sky Lakes Information Services (IS) team evaluated new data security and management solutions that were easier to use and would drive further efficiencies. Little did they know that our security and ransomware protection capabilities were going to be lifesaving, not only in terms of patient care, but also for the IS team.





## THE ATTACK:

In October 2020, Sky Lakes was unexpectedly targeted and breached by a massive ransomware attack.

The regional healthcare leader was attacked by the Ryuk ransomware variant, which impacted 70% of Sky Lakes IT operations, including their backups.

## THE RECOVERY:

We served on a rapid-response data management team for Sky Lakes as it defended its data against ransomware.

Our immutable backup snapshots, DataLock, and other built-in protections that deter, detect, and rapidly recover data at scale from a ransomware attack empowered the IS team to say no to the cybercriminals' demands.

Through the Cohesity data security and management platform, we were able to give IS staff access to a granular version of the organization's Active Directory database.

Sky Lakes was also able to instantly restore its file services thanks to our unique Cohesity SmartFiles capabilities. Fast, simple data restores enabled many patients who regularly rely on the Sky Lakes Cancer Treatment Center to minimize disruption in their treatments without being inconvenienced or sent elsewhere. "In this case, it's not an exaggeration to say that Cohesity saved lives," explains Nick Fossen, manager of Technology Solutions at Sky Lakes.

**"Cohesity helps us to put ransomware extortionists out of business."**

**John Gaede**, director of Information Systems, Sky Lakes Medical Center





“Our organization suffered a critical ransomware attack, effectively crippling our entire infrastructure. With Cohesity, we’ve been able to recover machines and file shares, verify they’re clean, and bring the applications back online. Cohesity has literally saved us hundreds of hours of work and I’d say it prevented us from having to actually pay the ransom note.”

**John Gaede**

Director of Information Systems  
Sky Lakes Medical Center



#### THE RESULTS:



**\$0 ransom  
paid**



**No data  
lost**



**100s of hours saved  
for data restores**



**INDUSTRY:** REAL ESTATE

**LOCATION:** BANGKOK, THAILAND

**FOUNDED:** 2009

# Refusing the ransom and **restoring data fast**

## **BACKGROUND:**

Thailand's Origin Property Public Company Limited, a real estate development firm managing numerous properties across Thailand, had been relying on a solution for data protection and recovery.

In 2022, the IT team decided to look for a new data security and management solution to help reduce backup times, improve data security, simplify scalability, and recover rapidly as they continued to expand.

"We store many different types of data, including our enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, customer databases, development data, and other core business applications at our company-owned facilities," explained Sirawut Chanthasangsawang, senior vice president of System Information Technology. "If we ever lost any of that data, it could be catastrophic for our company."



### THE ATTACK:

While the team was actively researching a new solution, ransomware struck, the existing solution failed, and all of Origin's databases, servers, and applications came to a standstill.

"Ransomware was attacking our primary storage by using an API to completely delete all of our volumes," explained Chanthasangsawang. "The intruders were encrypting all of our data repositories from our previous backup software, making them completely unusable for recovery. We would have been unable to recover unless we paid their ransom demands."

### THE RECOVERY:

Luckily, Origin had initiated a proof of concept (PoC) with us.

Since Origin had backed up its data onto the Cohesity data security and management platform during the PoC, Origin was able to protect and restore all their customer and enterprise data within three hours—and avoid paying the ransom.

Since then, we've enabled Origin to shorten data backup windows from 20 hours to just under three hours, an improvement of 85%. In addition to a stronger security posture, our solution has also resulted in a much lower TCO than the previous vendor's data protection software.

**"Cohesity was absolutely instrumental in recovering and restoring our entire environment. Without Cohesity, we would have ended up paying the ransom to get our data back."**

**Sirawut Chanthasangsawang**, SVP of  
System Information Technology,  
Origin Property





“Cohesity’s instant recovery enabled us to retrieve all of our data from the ransomware attack in under three hours. Without Cohesity, we would have had to pay the ransom to get our data back.”

**Sirawut Chanthasangsawang**

SVP of System Information Technology  
Origin Property



#### THE RESULTS:



**\$0 ransom  
paid**



**Data restored  
in 3 hours**



**No data  
lost**



**INDUSTRY:** RETAIL

**LOCATION:** ATLANTA, GA

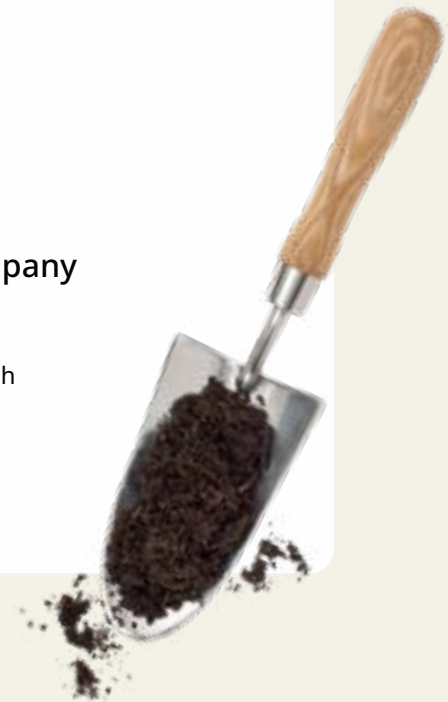
**FOUNDED:** 2013

# Distributor resumes operations **24 hours after cyberattack**

## **BACKGROUND:**

SiteOne Landscape Supply is a \$3.5 billion, Fortune 1000 company based in Atlanta.

With over 600 locations in the U.S. and Canada, it has seen heavy growth through acquisitions—and a doubling of its revenue—in the last five years.





### THE ATTACK:

At 3 a.m. on July 14, 2020, David Bannister, vice president of Technology Services, was awakened by one of his senior engineers who feared an attack on its information technology systems.

The environment was completely out, and the IT team was unable to reach internal servers or services. SiteOne launched an investigation, notified law enforcement, engaged legal counsel and other incident response professionals, and quickly implemented a series of containment and remediation measures to prevent the ransomware from spreading.

### THE RECOVERY:

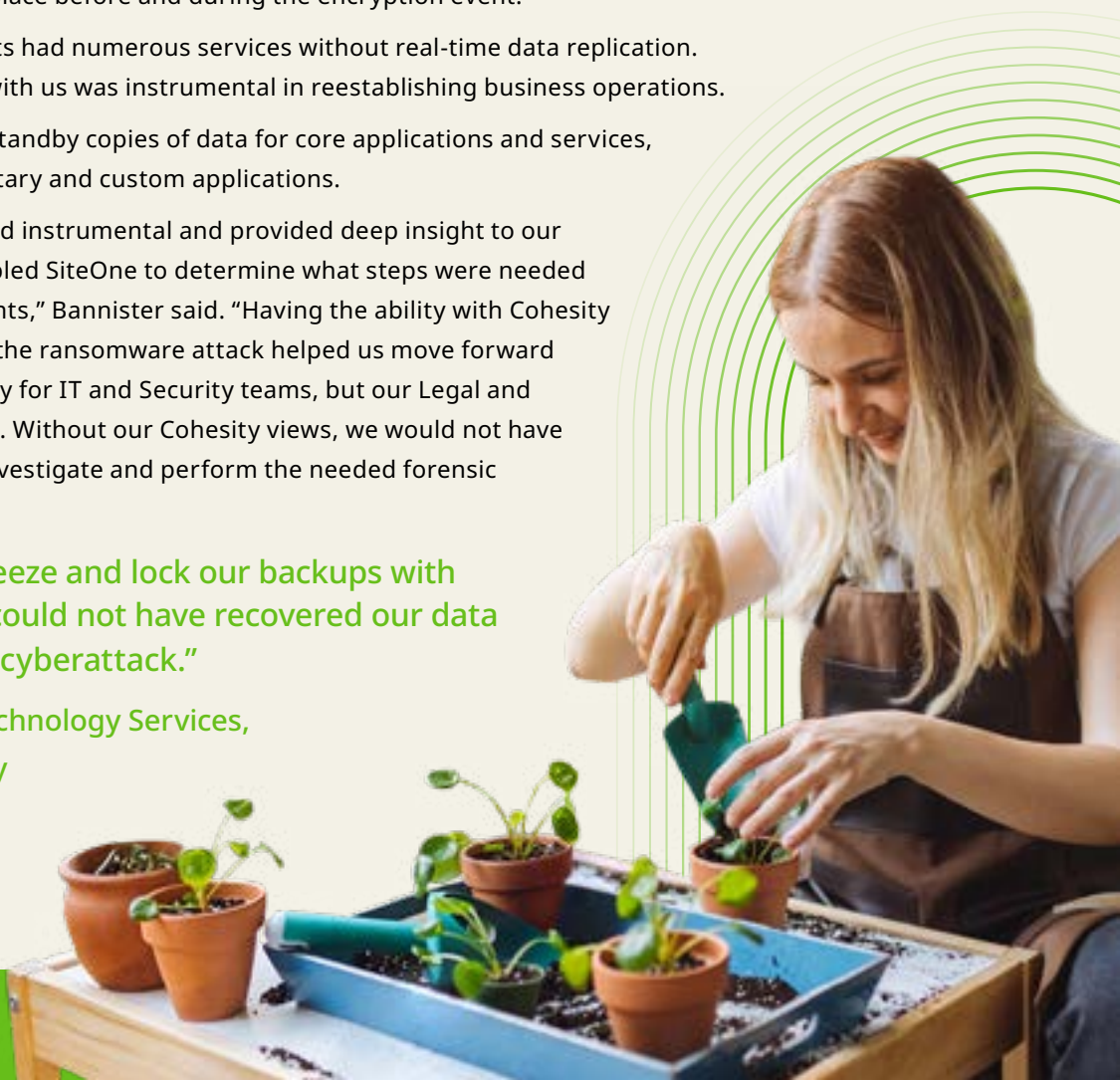
SiteOne recovered all critical operational data and prevented a significant impact on business operations.

- File shares on the Cohesity data security and management platform were restored in minutes.
- We restored VMs to a point in time before the incident—and isolated the data in a lab environment to identify what activities were taking place before and during the encryption event.
- Pre-production environments had numerous services without real-time data replication. Recovery of these systems with us was instrumental in reestablishing business operations.
- SiteOne had hot and warm standby copies of data for core applications and services, including numerous proprietary and custom applications.

“Cohesity snapshot views proved instrumental and provided deep insight to our forensic teams, as well as enabled SiteOne to determine what steps were needed to meet regulatory requirements,” Bannister said. “Having the ability with Cohesity to paint a complete picture of the ransomware attack helped us move forward and identify next steps not only for IT and Security teams, but our Legal and Communications departments. Without our Cohesity views, we would not have been as equipped to rapidly investigate and perform the needed forensic activities.”

**“Without the ability to freeze and lock our backups with Cohesity DataLock, we could not have recovered our data as quickly following the cyberattack.”**

**David Bannister, VP of Technology Services,  
SiteOne Landscape Supply**





“With Cohesity, we were able to be back up and running in 24 hours, and within a week our data was fully restored by our internal teams without having to decrypt anything.”

**David Bannister**

VP of Technology Services  
SiteOne Landscape Supply



#### THE RESULTS:



**\$0 ransom  
paid**



**Up and running  
in 24 hours**



**No need for data  
decryption**

# The critical need for **collaboration**

We recognize we can't fight the ransomware scourge in isolation.

Ecosystems can be a force multiplier. That's why we formed the [Data Security Alliance](#), partnering with the 'who's who' of cybersecurity and bringing together the brightest minds and boldest solutions for a comprehensive security, data protection, and resilience strategy.

## Data Security Alliance



“Most folks in the security industry will recognize that none of us can solve problems for our customers ourselves. We have to work together and it’s a key part of our platform at Tenable. By partnering with Cohesity and other industry leaders, we round out the ability for our customers to assess their attack surface, and enable customers to prioritize and focus on the most critical risks for exposure and cybersecurity.”

Ray Komar, vice president of Technical Alliances



“We continuously work to ensure that organizations with their endpoints, workloads, and users continue to operate without obstacles, while data is continuously secured against breaches and insider threats, including ransomware exfiltration.”

Michael Rogers, vice president of Global Alliances





We also created the Cohesity Security Advisory Council, bringing together visionaries with deep security expertise from a host of companies, including Mandiant, Netflix, Facebook, Microsoft, and the National Security Agency.

Led by Cohesity Board Member Kevin Mandia, the Council advises the Cohesity team, customers, and partners on security trends and emerging cyber threats and vulnerabilities.

“We’ve recently witnessed an explosion of vicious ransomware attacks where cybercriminals are getting smarter. . . Data security and data management leaders must work hand-in-hand to keep bad actors in their place.”

Kevin Mandia, Founder

MANDIANT



At Cohesity, we’re proud to offer customers our AI-powered data security platform—and the combined benefits of our collaborative, ecosystem approach.

**Let’s fight ransomware together.**



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