



Customer case **De Watergroep**

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Positive digital flow

De Watergroep secures data in the cloud with a managed backup provided by AvePoint

Whenever you store your data in the cloud, you as a company remain responsible for that data's security. De Watergroep found a solution from AvePoint that offers protection against data loss. Inetum-Realdolmen, which proposed AvePoint's cloud backup, is responsible for its management and support. "They take the burden off our IT team," says Philip De Ruyck, ICT Operations Team Manager at De Watergroep.

De Watergroep is an independent Flemish water company that supplies over 3.3 million customers and various companies with sustainable water. More than 1,600 in-house staff work day in, day out to supply 177 municipalities, spread across the provinces of West and East Flanders, Flemish Brabant and Limburg using a pipeline network spanning 34,000 kilometers.

Cloud-first strategy

As the largest potable water company in Flanders, De Watergroep acts a role model, even when it comes to innovation. This can be seen in the company's IT policy and much more besides. Cloud applications, such as Microsoft Office 365, have played a key role in the company's policy for some time now. "We're currently adopting a cloud-first strategy," explains Philip De Ruyck. "This means that when we invest in new IT resources, we always start by looking for cloud solutions first."

As IT Operations Team Manager, Philip De Ruyck is also heavily involved in De Watergroep's ICT security policy. This role allows him to see more than the numerous operational benefits of cloud solutions, as he's also only too aware of the potential risks involved. "Our employees enjoy greater freedom and flexibility in their use of IT resources," he continues. "They no longer need to contact us for every little thing, and they can do quite a lot themselves. However, not all members of staff are aware of the potential risks and dangers that can crop up if IT resources are used carelessly."

If something goes awry that causes an employee to lose data, such as a document or an email, they must still be able to rely on their ICT department to be able to recover the data. Today, however, such data is often in the cloud and no longer on De Watergroep's own systems. "That's why it's important to have a solution that can also offer adequate protection for the data in the cloud and restore it if necessary in the event of data loss," emphasizes the IT Operations Team Manager.



AvePoint provides backup and recovery

Although De Ruyck has a great deal of confidence in the services Microsoft provides via Office 365, De Watergroep remains responsible for its own data when using the popular office suite. "There's always the risk that some data will be lost due to incorrect manipulations or minor accidents. Human error can never be ruled out," he says. "To mitigate this risk, we needed a good backup and recovery solution for Office 365."

De Watergroep went looking for such a solution with Inetum-Realdolmen as a technology partner. Following a close consultation with architects, system engineers and other IT experts, they settled on AvePoint's backup and recovery solution. "With AvePoint, we take two backups of our entire Office 365 environment every day," says De Ruyck. "That means all OneDrive files, all emails, all Teams chats and all files on SharePoint Online."

If an employee loses a document in Office 365, they can contact De Watergroep's IT helpdesk to ask them to recover the document. AvePoint's solution, however, also offers a self-service option. A user-friendly AvePoint app in Teams means users can recover files themselves using a simple chat module. "This is how we ensure our end users are more efficient and productive. They no longer need to worry about losing a document or folder, an email or even an entire mailbox."

Protection against malware is an added bonus

Another reason behind De Watergroep opting for AvePoint proved to be the rapid increase in the number of cyberattacks. "In the event of a ransomware attack, for example, we can now also use AvePoint's backup functionality to restore our entire Office 365 environment to its original state in no time."

Philip De Ruyck also praised Inetum-Realdolmen's ongoing support: "Initially, they helped us choose the right product. Now, they also help us to manage backups and restore files." What's more, De Watergroep opted for a managed service plan to make life even easier for the IT Operations Team Manager. "The specialists at Inetum-Realdolmen unburden our IT team. This allows us to increase our focus on activities that offer greater added value for our organization and our customers."

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MORE INFORMATION?

About Inetum-Realdolmen: www.inetum-realdolmen.world

About De Watergroep: www.dewatergroep.be