Victorinox uses Veeam to protect the production of more than 100,000 Swiss Army Knives per day

“The Veeam solution is an extremely versatile tool for us. We can use it to reliably secure all digital processes, such as those required for the production of a Swiss Army Knife.”

— Lorenz Ender
Systems Engineer, Victorinox AG

The business challenge

People associate the Victorinox brand with one product in particular: the Swiss Army Officer’s and Sports Knife developed by company founder Karl Elsener — today better known as the Swiss Army Knife. Since its invention in 1897, this compact, multifunctional tool has been produced more than 500 million times and has proven its worth in countless situations. Among other things, a Victorinox pocketknife is part of the basic equipment of every NASA astronaut and has already been used to perform repairs in space.

While Swiss Army Knives in many variations still form the core business of Victorinox today, the company now offers products in four additional categories. Today, the brand also stands for high-quality household and professional knives, watches, luggage and perfumes. Most products are still manufactured in Switzerland.

Today, the IT of the globally active company is also largely controlled from the headquarters in Ibach-Schwyz. “Step by step, we have integrated the distributed IT environments into a common Active Directory, centralized resources and standardized our application landscape,” explains Lorenz Ender, Systems Engineer in the IT infrastructure team at Victorinox. “In order to operate as economically as possible and maintain full control over the security of our digital processes, we also consistently rely on the insourcing of IT services.”

Victorinox operates most of its IT applications in its own two data centers, which are connected via dark fiber. The core applications for daily business include the central ERP system Comarch. Victorinox uses it to control almost all business processes — from procurement and production planning to logistics.

Industry
Manufacturing

Company

Originating from a knife forge in 1884, Victorinox has stood for quality, functionality, innovation and design for more than 130 years. Today, the company is active worldwide in five business segments: Swiss Army Knives, household and professional knives, watches, luggage and perfumes. The majority of the products are still manufactured in Switzerland. Victorinox currently employs over 2,000 people and generates annual sales of around 500 million Swiss francs.
“In recent years, we have pushed ahead with digitization in many areas — for example, in our new distribution center, which supplies all customers and trading partners in Europe,” says Lorenz Ender. “The highly automated operation there is based on processes that can only function using IT. If, for example, the warehouse management system had no access to the data in the ERP system, we would no longer be able to pick and ship goods.”

Therefore, the IT department needed a powerful backup solution for its virtualized IT infrastructure. Virtual machines with a data volume of over 100 terabytes must always be reliably backed up. However, the software initially used for this could no longer meet Victorinox’s requirements. “Again and again we were struggling with problems like inconsistent backups and cumbersome recovery processes,” reports Ender.

As part of the replacement of the existing storage solution, the company also invited tenders for a new backup concept. The aim was to find a future-proof, easy-to-use solution that would harmonize with different virtualization and storage architectures.

The Veeam solution

Victorinox reviewed concepts from various vendors and finally decided to implement Veeam® Backup & Replication™, along with a new storage solution from Pure Storage. From the systems engineer’s point of view, a number of factors spoke in favor of the Veeam solution: “In addition to the functions for fast recovery of virtual machines, storage optimization and intuitive operation, we were particularly impressed by the vast flexibility. The solution allows us to back up both physical and virtual systems — and we are not bound to a particular hypervisor or storage solution. This makes Veeam an extremely versatile tool for us.”

The flexible application possibilities paid off for Victorinox very quickly. The virtualized IT infrastructure was originally based on Microsoft Hyper-V — however, a switch to VMware vSphere was pending. As Veeam supports both Hyper-V and VMware workloads, the migration to VMware could be completed in a very short time. During the migration, all VMs on both environments were seamlessly backed up. With Veeam, Victorinox was able to secure all workloads from the same interface and ensure consistent availability of all business applications without the need to expand or fundamentally change the backup infrastructure.

Physical servers were also integrated into the central backup concept: Victorinox uses the Veeam Agent for Microsoft Windows to back up several new servers that are otherwise operated by a third-party provider. This means that these servers can also be restored very quickly after a hardware defect or other technical problem — and the manufacturer’s business processes can be immediately continued.

The data from Victorinox’s IT systems is first backed up to the primary backup repository in the main data center and then copied to the second location via Backup Copy Job. Even if one of the two data centers fail, a complete restore is still possible in a short time.
With the help of Instant VM Recovery®, even vast virtual machines can be restarted from the backup within minutes. “In the past, recovery often took several hours, but now even VMs with several terabytes are immediately available again,” says Ender. “Only a few months ago, this helped us to successfully complete a planned adjustment to a system within the available maintenance window.”

Victorinox also saves time in the granular recovery of individual files or application objects. If, for example, a user has accidentally deleted a document on a file server, the Veeam interface can be used to search for it and make the document available again quickly. “This has also significantly increased user satisfaction,” says the systems engineer happily.

The IT department at Victorinox can hardly imagine operating the infrastructure without the Veeam solution. “We benefit from extremely reliable processes, very little manual effort and smooth updates,” summarizes Ender. “Whereas in the past we often experienced compatibility problems after an update, with Veeam we can easily switch to the latest version.”

Finally, Veeam also helps the company deal with current security challenges. The implemented solution offers Victorinox several ways to protect sensitive company data from attacks by ransomware. Air-gaps in the solution architecture and repository options such as rotating media can prevent ransomware from encrypting backup data, for example. “This holistic approach is what distinguishes Veeam in particular,” explains Ender. “The company not only provides a backup solution but has thought through the issues of data security and data availability from start to finish.”

**The results**

- **Smooth production and logistics processes thanks to high IT availability:** With the Veeam solution, Victorinox ensures, among other things, that more than 100,000 Swiss Army Knives are produced every day and shipped to 120 countries worldwide. Virtually, all critical IT systems for production and logistics are secured with Veeam.

- **Relief for the IT department during ongoing operations:** The operative effort for the backup and recovery of IT resources has been significantly reduced with Veeam. While in the past even external specialists were employed to check backup data, today IT has the certainty that applications and data are reliably backed up and can be restored in minutes.

- **Integrated protection against ransomware attacks:** The Veeam solution now also plays an important role for data security at Victorinox. Veeam offers the company proven methods to protect sensitive company data from ransomware attacks.