HPE Cloud Volumes Backup: A Diamond in the Rough?
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IDC's Quick Take
HPE Cloud Volumes Backup provides storage agnostic data protection with key backup ISV software to enable backup consolidation, data analytics and other use cases for backup data. While HPE touts cost savings and simplicity as key benefits, we believe the potential for enabling data-driven activities may be far greater.

Product Announcement Highlights
HPE Cloud Volumes Backup is a new backup service that consolidate backup data in the cloud using HPE Cloud Volumes. It provides bi-directional data mobility to and from on-premise and the cloud without the typical egress costs of moving data from the public cloud. HPE Cloud Volumes Backup uses the Catalyst engine from HPE StoreOnce to connect to ISV backup software from Commvault, Veeam, Veritas, MicroFocus and others. Once in HPE Cloud Volumes, the data is available for additional uses such as analytics, test/dev, staging and more. Data can be recovered and utilized either on-premise or in the public cloud. Among the important features being released, according to HPE, is making backups "invisible" to malware and ransomware with data encrypted at rest and in-motion. The product is available immediately with pay-as-you-go pricing available.

IDC's Point of View
Leading organizations seek competitive advantage through data-driven activities that harness the value of data. At the same time, these companies are utilizing exponentially more applications. In fact, IDC forecasts that as many applications will be deployed in in the next five years as have been in the previous 40 years. Our research indicates that more than 80% of these applications will be deployed in the cloud, either as cloud-native applications or SaaS applications (e.g., SFDC, MS Office365, Workday). Because these applications are managed by their third-party owner, IT organizations have little control over their data management policies, such as retention, disposition and so on. As a result, many organizations are turning to third-party data protection tools to gather the data and protect it according to their own corporate governance standards. However, because these applications may use a variety of data formats, including traditional RDBMS, file system and NoSQL, the data becomes siloed and difficult to correlate for analytical purposes.

Our research also finds the majority of organizations have multiple backup/recovery (B/R) applications. In fact, the average is 2-4, with as many as seven such applications in some organizations. The use of numerous B/R applications leads to infrastructure redundancies, labor inefficiencies and even more siloed data locked inside proprietary backup formats.

In releasing HPE Cloud Volumes Backup, the company aims to consolidate backup operations and to make the backup data available for the secondary use cases mentioned above. The company touts lower costs in terms of no egress fees, low bandwidth de-duplicated data transfer, changed block data recovery from the cloud for faster recovery and cloud lock-in avoidance. While we don't doubt any of
these benefits, we find the ability to break down data silos and thereby make data available for deep analysis to be the most interesting. By ingesting and converting data from multiple sources into a common, manageable format, IT organizations can apply analytics and AI tools to make data correlations that lead to market, product, customer and other competitive insights. The second most important aspect of this solution is the elimination of public cloud egress costs. Egress costs can be a significant hindrance for organizations looking to migrate secondary storage data for cost or workload purposes. Since data and pricing is managed through HPE Cloud Volumes, customers can eliminate egress costs from the equation.

The immediate opportunity for HPE Cloud Volumes Backup will be among existing Cloud Volumes customers. HPE Cloud Volumes Backup brings the same user interface and experience of HPE Cloud Volumes that is already familiar to customers. Moreover, backup and data protection are two of the leading workloads that customers deploy to leverage public cloud resources. HPE Cloud Volumes Backup allows existing HPE and third-party storage customers to do so in a non-disruptive manner with a range of leading backup ISVs.

HPE (and prior that HP), has a history of developing solid, capable data protection and backup products that gain user acclaim. Data Protector was one of those products, but has since been transferred to MicroFocus as part of the HPE-MicroFocus spin-merge. Unfortunately, products like Data Protector were often overshadowed by other products in the HP portfolio. Now, HPE has re-entered the data protection software market in an innovative way that is unique in the industry. We believe HPE Cloud Volumes Backup has significant market potential, especially if HPE promotes it as a product in its own right.

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