

# VMware ESX Backup Options

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Judging by the fact that you are reading this thread you have either implemented VMware or are considering it and are wondering what options are available for backing up your virtual machines. Below is a quick (slightly biased) summary of some the options that are available for backing up your VMs and some of the pros and cons of each. It is obviously up to you what solution makes the most sense based on your specific needs or budget but the following should at least give you a framework for thinking about your options.

**1. Use your existing backup software to backup each VM.** While this seems a logical method, one of the benefits of virtualizing your servers is to get a way from the old way of doing things - namely buying hardware and software for each server instance. By using a dedicated backup agent for each VM you will incur costs and licensing hassles every time you add a virtual machine. In addition, backup is a very resource consuming process. Running multiple backup agents on each VM can put a heavy load on your ESX server and may slow down critical applications. Our company Idealstor offers a backup solution that is licensed per server instance. Most of our clients will use this as they migrate to having all of their servers virtualized or to backup servers that they plan on leaving on the network. <http://www.idealstor.com/ibac.html>

**2. Use VMware Consolidated Backup (VCB).** VCB comes with any paid version of VMware and if you are using ESXi it can be downloaded as a trial from vmware.com. VCB requires scripting and a lot of patience/time to get decent backups going. Most companies

will use a combination of their existing backup software and VCB to get a mix of file level backups and full VM backups.

**3. Use a VMware specific backup solution.** Typically these solutions are licensed per ESX host and let you easily backup and recover your VMs. Keep an eye out for companies that charge per VM or per processor but also for companies that insist you use their file level backup software and their VMware product in tandem - more products will probably mean more licensing costs.

Our VMware backup - iBac Virtual Infrastructure Proxy (iBac VIP - <http://www.idealstor.com/VIP.html>) is licensed per ESX host or per VMware Virtual Center. The option that is licensed per host lets you backup any number of VMs without charging you for the number of processors running on that host server. As mentioned, iBac VIP is also licensed per Virtual Center and in this case there is no additional charge per VM, processor or ESX host. iBac VIP ties into VCB and will allow you to backup an entire VM and recover at the file level or recover an entire server.