

CASE STUDY

# Retail Resilience with Object First and Veeam

## Fortifying a Digital Shopfront



**Customer:**

A prominent UK-based value-driven clothing retailer with a significant national presence and a growing e-commerce operation. The organisation manages a complex infrastructure supporting numerous retail outlets and a high-volume distribution network.

**Operations:**

Integrated retail management applications running on a hybrid infrastructure, supported by Veeam Backup & Replication.

**Highlights:**

- › **Transition to Immutable Storage:**  
Migration from legacy IBM SAN storage to a dedicated 64TB Object First OOTBI appliance.
- › **Zero Trust Architecture:**  
Implementation within an isolated infrastructure subnet, hardened against external connectivity.
- › **Enhanced IT Resilience:**  
Successful integration of primary immutable storage with secondary tape and cloud-connect copies.
- › **Strategic Health Check:**  
Comprehensive optimisation of the existing Veeam configuration to leverage recovery features.
- › **Cost-Effective Security:**  
High-performance ransomware protection achieved within a value-driven budget.

**Covenco Solutions:**

- › Object First OOTBI (64TB Appliance)
- › Veeam Backup & Replication Platinum Services
- › Professional Engineering (Onsite Build & Configuration)
- › Infrastructure Health Check and Hardening

This case study serves as a definitive example of how a well-planned transition to immutable storage technology can empower retail businesses to achieve greater resilience and confidence in an era of heightened cyber risk.

**For this leading UK clothing retailer, the project was not merely a hardware refresh but a strategic pivot towards a Zero Trust data protection posture.**

The organisation has been a long-standing partner of Covenco, trusting the team's expertise to manage its most critical data assets.

When the retailer's ageing IBM Storage Works SAN reached the end of its maintainable lifespan in late 2025, the IT leadership recognised an opportunity to do more than simply replace like-for-like capacity. They sought to address the modern 'ransomware reality' that has recently impacted many high-street peers.

**OBJECT  
FIRST**

**veeam**

## The Challenge: Moving Beyond the 'Windows LUN'

Since 2018, the customer had relied on an IBM SAN for its primary backup repository. While functional, the system lacked the native immutability required to withstand sophisticated modern attacks.

The Head of IT noted that the previous setup consisted of straightforward Windows LUNs presented to the backup server.

If a threat actor gained administrative access to that server, the backups were effectively susceptible to the same encryption or deletion as the primary data.

The urgency of this modernisation was grounded in real-world experience because the retailer had already suffered attempted ransomware attacks.

While the team was fortunate enough to catch the attack in progress and recover from existing snapshots, the event was a watershed moment.

The attack highlighted that the existing air-gapped approach was largely conceptual rather than physical, and that the window of opportunity for recovery was dangerously narrow.

Furthermore, 2024 and 2025 had seen a surge in high-profile ransomware incidents across the UK retail and automotive sectors, with brands like M&S, Harrods, and JLR facing significant scrutiny.

For a value-driven retailer where operational efficiency is the cornerstone of the business model, the potential downtime associated with a successful attack was deemed an unacceptable risk.

"There's been a lot of press coverage over M&S, Co-op, Harrods and JLR about ransomware attacks. Those incidents started the conversation about immutable backup repositories for us..."  
Head of IT

# The Solution: Selecting 'Out-of-the-Box Immutability'

When evaluating a replacement for the existing on-site backups, the retailer considered several paths, including a bolt-on immutable storage option from HP or IBM. However, following a comprehensive sizing and budget analysis, a different forerunner emerged: OOTBI from Object First.

The decision-making process was driven by three primary criteria:

## 1. Native Immutability:

Unlike many add-on solutions that add complexity to a general-purpose SAN, Object First was built from the ground up to provide immutable S3-compatible object storage. This out-of-the-box Immutability ensured that once data was written, it could not be altered or deleted by any user, including an administrator with compromised credentials.

## 2. Veeam Integration:

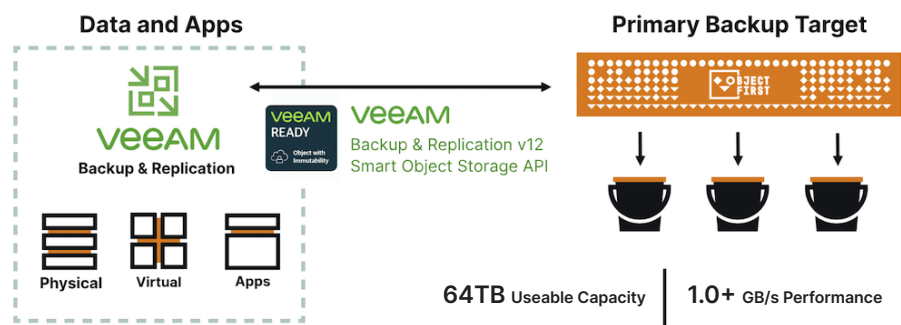
As a Platinum Partner for both Veeam and Object First, Covenco was able to demonstrate the seamless, native integration between the two platforms. The customer has been using Veeam since 2018, outgrowing previous solutions like Backup Exec and DPM. The ability to manage the OOTBI appliance directly through the Veeam interface was a significant operational advantage.

## 3. Cost vs. Complexity:

For a value-driven retailer, budget is always a critical constraint. The 64TB Object First appliance provided a dedicated, high-performance repository at a price point that was significantly more attractive than enterprise-scale SAN hardware. It allowed the organisation to achieve a sophisticated security posture without the 'enterprise tax'.

"The Zero Trust architecture of Object First - which eliminates access to the underlying operating system - was a major selling point. It removed the 'human element' of risk from the repository layer entirely."

Head of IT.



# Implementation: Precision Engineering in an Isolated Environment

In November 2025, the Covenco team arrived onsite to orchestrate the implementation. Although Object First's OOTBI appliance can be set up within minutes, the project was not a simple 'plug-and-play' exercise; it involved a deep-dive into the retailer's highly restricted network environment.

## Hardened Infrastructure:

The retailer maintains an exceptionally rigid network configuration. The new Veeam backup server and Object First appliance were placed into an isolated infrastructure subnet with no external connectivity to the outside world. This created significant installation hurdles, as the team had to manually configure application-aware guest processing without the benefit of standard external lookups.

Covenco's engineer worked alongside the retailer's internal team to access just enough of the network to allow the backup operations to function while maintaining a strictly hardened stance.

## Technical Nuance and Optimisation:

While the out-of-the-box promise of Object First is a 10-minute setup, the reality in a high-security retail environment required more finesse.

The team opted for a 10Gb Ethernet connection over Fibre to suit the existing switch infrastructure, and though the initial setup appeared to be complex, the installation was completed efficiently within one day.

## A Valuable Health Check:

A key component of the Covenco engagement was a comprehensive health check of the existing Veeam configuration. Because the original Veeam environment had been built by various consultants over the years, some historical decisions were sub-optimal.

The engineers identified several feature updates and configuration tidying opportunities, ensuring the retailer was getting the most out of their Veeam investment and preparing them for a transition to the latest version this year.



OOTBI from Object First provides IT teams with Veeam integrated fully immutable on-site backups for faster recovery.

"The difference with Covenco is, when you test, you really test. And, we get to be part of the recovery, which is very important. You need to understand how to get things back... otherwise, it can leave a knowledge gap".

Head of IT.

# The Results: Peace of Mind at Retail Speeds

Since the appliance became operational, the impact on the retailer's IT resilience has been profound, though virtually invisible in day-to-day operations - the hallmark of a successful infrastructure project.

## Operational Efficiency:

The integration has resulted in minimal day-to-day overhead. The IT team simply monitors an additional backup job notification email. The Object First appliance 'sits in the corner and works,' providing high-speed snapshots without impacting the performance of the retail applications.

## Restoration Confidence:

The most significant result is the change in the Head of IT's sleep patterns. Knowing that a copy of the data is truly immutable - tested by attempting to delete snapshots with administrative access and failing - has changed the organisation's disaster recovery posture.

## Speed of Recovery:

While the customer continues to use Covenco's tape services for long-term offsite storage retention, the Object First appliance provides a near-line immutable copy. In a recovery scenario, this is exponentially faster than recalling tapes from a third-party provider such as Iron Mountain. 'It's the best of both worlds,' the Head of IT remarked. 'It's as safe as tape because it's immutable, but it's always online and ready to go.'

"OOTBI from Object First helps me sleep better at night. I know that even if we are attacked, I have data to restore from, quickly."

Head of IT.

## Active Recovery Testing:

A deciding factor for the customer in choosing Covenco over previous providers was the approach to recovery testing. In previous relationships, testing was a passive exercise - tapes were dropped off, and the provider would ask the client to log in and 'check if it works.'

With Covenco, the retailer is an active participant in the recovery process. This participation-based testing ensures that the internal IT team totally understands how to get their systems back in a real disaster. 'If the consultant you used for the test isn't available during a real attack, you have a massive knowledge gap,' the Head of IT explained. 'Covenco bridges that gap by making us part of the process.'

## About Covenco

Covenco is a modern private-cloud backup and recovery service provider, connecting data management services with robust IT hardware supply and support.

Drawing on over 35 years of experience, our team provides strategic expertise for Security and IT Leaders navigating complex data landscapes.

We support business leadership by addressing sophisticated compliance demands and delivering recovery strategies that ensure operational continuity while improving overall business resiliency. We provide world-class data protection solutions with a distinct advantage: unmatched speed in disaster recovery and hardware deployment.

Our UK data centres have over two Petabytes of customer data under management at any time, and we are fully ISO27001 and Cyber Essentials accredited for data security.



## Conclusion: A Blueprint for Resilient Retail IT

By choosing the Object First OOTBI appliance and Covenco's professional services, this leading UK retailer has effectively ransomware-proofed their primary backup repository, on-site. They have moved from a vulnerable, legacy SAN architecture to a modern, zero trust, immutable environment that balances high-end security with value-driven budgeting.

The Head of IT's advice to other organisations is simple: "Just go for it. If you have a budget concern and you haven't got a way of truly protecting your data from modern threats, this solution makes absolute sense. It's the closest thing to an air gap you can get while staying online and on-prem."

## The Covenco Advantage

The success of this project is a testament to the value of a high-level partnership. As a long-standing Platinum Partner for Veeam, Covenco brought a level of technical authority that a standard reseller could not provide.

Through this partnership, Covenco has not only delivered a 64TB immutable backup appliance - but has fortified the digital foundation of one of the UK's most trusted retail brands.

## Contact Covenco

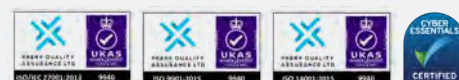
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