



Understanding Backup and Data Protection

What You Need to Know

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UNDERSTANDING BACKUP AND DATA PROTECTION

Today's small and medium sized businesses (SMBs), both nonprofit and commercial, are creating more data than ever. Their growth calls for more robust solutions to back up their business-critical data.

STATE OF IT SERVICES FOR SMBS

SMBs are often constrained by limited IT resources. Often the job of managing IT, or managing a third party IT service provider, is left to a non-technical employee. This makes it even more important for top executives to understand exactly what the company has in place for a backup solution.

Before we jump into that criteria, it is important to understand why backup is critical for all businesses. Successful backup is the foundation for disaster recovery and business continuity. Without it, recovery and continuity cannot exist. Technologies that were created decades ago to store data are simply not enough. Antiquated methods, like tape backup, aren't going to ensure data retention and recovery during business critical time windows.

When choosing a backup solution, businesses should look for 6 important pieces of criteria: comprehensiveness, ease of use, recoverability, performance and reliability, affordability, and scalability.

Comprehensiveness

Most small businesses generally do not have a dedicated IT department that can manage separate backup, recovery and business continuity solutions. Does the solution provide key functionality that is seamlessly integrated? A combination of on-premises and cloud-based services offer the best total protection for businesses of all sizes, especially small businesses.

Hardware systems do sometimes fail, and at that point users can rely on instant virtualization of failed systems. The strongest of providers will be able to convert a backup into a running system in a matter of seconds.

Ease of Use

As employees of small to mid-sized businesses (SMBs) tend to take on multiple roles at work, managing IT shouldn't be one of them. Solutions that offer intelligent user interfaces and are also supported by a vast network of managed service providers are often the best choices.

Recoverability

Most SMBs carry less than a month of operating costs in cash, so downtime can quite literally 'break the bank'. Instant recovery capabilities can remedy this. Hardware systems do sometimes fail, and at that point users can rely on instant virtualization of failed systems. The strongest of providers will be



able to convert a backup into a running system in a matter of seconds. In the event of natural disasters, complete system replication is necessary, which allots users a complete infrastructure to host their business on.

Performance and Reliability

It makes sense that quicker and more frequent backups limit data loss. So when choosing a reliable solution, SMBs should choose one that performs backups very often. An ideal solution is incremental backup, where the technology adds what you've changed or deleted, rather than backing up the entire volume of data repeatedly. This adds to a solution's ability to perform more quickly.

Affordability

SMBs likely do not have huge IT budgets. With limited financial and technical resources, choosing a backup solution can be a trying task. Many opt for cheaper solutions, which allot them less functionality. Cheaper solutions may seem like the right call in the moment, but down the road it can be quite costly when the solution doesn't do all that an SMB needed to prevent downtime. It's important to find the most cost effective and affordable solution- which won't require sacrificing significant features and capabilities.

Scalability

Successful small businesses often grow into larger businesses. With that comes the creation of more and more data. Alongside this growth is a need for more advanced backup and business continuity solutions. Selecting a provider who works with businesses of all sizes, promises SMBs a bigger selection of products and services to meet their needs as they evolve.

SPECIFIC FEATURES TO LOOK FOR

Now that you know what to look for when selecting backup solutions, we'll dive deeper into the technologies and features that add to more complete solutions. When it comes to total data protection, SMBs should be on the lookout for these features to ensure their data is not only backed up but available in the case of a potential disaster.

Proof of Backup

It's not enough to put a technology in place and assume it's always working in the background. With any sophisticated technology, there are potential points of failure. An intelligent business continuity service should offer automated assurance to ensure that systems are always bootable and provide screenshot verification.

Image-Based Backup

This feature serves as the backbone of a system and adds significant usability in disaster scenarios. With image-based backup, users no longer have to pick and choose which files are backed up or worry about saving the most recent draft to the shared/backup folder. A picture of the workstation or server is taken and stored as a place in time for that machine. This is essential for restoration because rebuilding or virtualizing a machine requires not just files, but also the applications and systems.

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Virtualization

Virtualization refers to the process around creating a virtual version of something. In the case of business continuity, this would likely be servers, devices, applications, or entire networks. The virtualized versions act completely independently from the physical devices. This feature keeps businesses functioning when the physical devices fail, minimizing downtime.

Secure Storage

Keeping your data secure, whether it be personal or business, is hugely important when selecting a backup solution. Natural disasters can wipe out entire facilities, so it is important to choose a provider with multiple, geographically separated data centers.

CONCLUSION

When selecting your backup and business continuity solution keep in mind the key elements you want to look for. Highly reliable solutions will yield full backups in a smarter, storage-saving way, limit downtime, and offer strong functionality at all levels. It's also important to keep in mind your company's long-term goals.

If you are growing at a healthy pace and looking for an IT services provider who can safeguard your business while catering to your budget, contact us and learn more on how we can assist.



ABOUT NTIVA

Ntiva is a trusted Managed IT and Cloud services provider that offers IT services and support to businesses of all types, building and maintaining infrastructure, securing networks, and providing strategic technology expertise. Our team of world-class talent genuinely cares about the relationships we build and understands that response and precision are fundamental keys to a successful partnership. Ntiva's ultimate objective is to help our clients leverage their technology investments to improve their overall business performance.