

Disaster Recovery Strategy for SMBs



Introduction

Today the need for disaster recovery extends far beyond major enterprises. Every small and medium business (SMB) depends on its network for virtually all its activities. If it is down for any length of time or critical data is lost, the cost can be enormous. In fact, the National Archives & Records Administration reported that 93 percent of the companies who lost their data center for 10 days or more filed for bankruptcy within a year. Anyone who watches nightly television should be aware disasters could occur anywhere.

But what is an SMB to do? Few have the trained staff to do extensive planning or can afford to take on major activities that have no immediate payoff. Furthermore, most disaster recovery software and services are aimed at large companies with sophisticated computer systems, in-house expertise and large budgets. What about a typical SMB with one or two IT people and the usual Microsoft software and Intel servers?

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Fortunately, there are solutions that are reasonably priced and easy to implement. Companies can use a combination of disk and tape backup solutions to protect their systems. The best strategy nowadays is to back up your data to disk regularly and then archive it to tape every so often depending on how critical it is. Be sure to test tape recovery; it is a notoriously fickle and uncertain operation. A trial run now will avoid big problems later.

Developing a disaster recovery plan sounds like a tedious, time-consuming exercise. Hence, many SMBs simply ignore or postpone it. However, using configurable templates reduces the time required significantly. Focus on recovery, not just backup. When a disaster occurs, it can take days to get all your systems and databases up and running. Users should look for approaches that help them recover quickly without doing any programming.

Companies can create a cost-effective disaster recovery site by simply investing in standby servers. They provide a high level of data protection and fast recovery if the primary server fails. The standby server can even act as a read-only device during normal operations. The extra server generally costs much less than buying extra peripherals or services.

On the software side, for example, MarketStor's ExchangeDR and SequelDR applications, designed for disk-to-disk backup, automates backup through configurable templates. When things go wrong, users can recover the entire server, database, mailbox or even a single message with just one click. MarketStor also provides a cost-effective standby solution for SMBs.

Conclusion

Businesses of all sizes must take backup and disaster recovery seriously. Who knows what can happen? In recent years, information and data has become a vitally important corporate asset essential to business continuity all around the world. The ability to recover critical data quickly after a disaster is a fundamental requirement of economic viability. Microsoft SQL, Exchange and Windows Servers are being increasingly used in mission critical environments and hence recovering them from a disaster is crucial for business continuity.

It is very important to have a disaster recovery plan that is easy to follow, well documented and known by employees. Relying on one employee or a not documented process will only leave a company vulnerable, especially in disastrous scenarios. It is imperative to have proper processes and software implemented and tested to recover quickly from a disaster.



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