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What is Disaster Recovery?

How does it work and why is it important to integrate a Disaster Recovery Plan into Your Business?

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Introduction.

Many smaller businesses are heavily reliant on technology to run daily operations in the workplace. Many of these organisations either do not have the budget required to implement a full-blown disaster recovery plan on their own, or they are unaware of the importance of having a disaster recovery plan in place.

If your business has become heavily reliant on high availability technology, any type of disruption will lower the tolerance among staff and customers, in the event of a disaster that causes extensive downtime.

Additionally.

You will likely experience loss of revenue if there is an outage for an extended length of time. Some disasters may be improbable, but it is still important to recognise the possibility of it occurring for disaster recovery purposes.

If a disaster should occur in your area, would your business be able to be up and running within a very short time after?

If the answer to the above question is "no" or you are not sure, the following whitepaper will provide you with what you should know about disaster recovery. Additionally, there are several options you can pursue to begin implementing a disaster recovery plan while keeping IT costs and maintenance at a minimum.

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What is Disaster Recovery?

Disaster Recovery is an important process that organisations of all sizes implement to ensure the rapid recovery of applications, data and hardware that are critical to business operations in the event of a natural disaster, network or hardware failure or human error.

The main role of a disaster recovery plan.

A Disaster Recovery plan is used to quickly restore IT assets to ensure business continuity. However, successful Disaster Recovery requires vital planning and manpower to carry out the steps necessary to achieve recovery.

Disaster Recovery plans are typically part of a more extensive initiative which is commonly known as Business Continuity Planning. After a thorough review of business procedures and planning, disaster recovery plans are well rehearsed so everyone is familiar with their role should a disaster suddenly occur.

Practice makes perfect.

Your business should also ensure that the DR plan is routinely updated to accommodate new staff members, hardware and software modifications or expansion to a branch office, to name a few examples. The DR plan should also be routinely practiced to ensure everyone knows their role in recovery and remains on the same page, so to speak.

Ensuring your data remains secure and compliant.

Disaster recovery (DR) also plays a significant role in the level of security for your small business. Part of your strategy is to implement security planning into disaster recovery to ensure your data remains secure and in compliance with your specific industry. This part of the planning also provides you with the peace of mind that critical business functions can be recovered quickly after disaster strikes.

In a nutshell.

Disaster recovery is a solution that ensures your small business will continue to operate as close to normal daily operations as possible. In addition to planning, the disaster recovery process also involves testing and accessing a separate physical site at a distance to restore critical business functions.

Why is Disaster Recovery Important?

Without your data, your business doesn't exist.

Any type of disaster that causes a disruption in daily business operations can be devastating for a small organisation. Many studies have indicated that a high percentage of small businesses can fail permanently after significant outage or data loss.

In today's competitive marketplace.

Disaster recovery is all that much more important for a small organisation. With no disaster recovery plan, you are placing your business at high risk of data and/or financial loss, reduction in customer service and retention and loss of company reputation.

When you think about it, that is a lot to sacrifice when there are numerous affordable options to help your business avoid the risks of failing to integrate a disaster recovery plan into your business continuity strategy.

Don't bank on the improbable.

There are a broad range of disasters that can be caused by nature, technology and humans that lead to situations where your business needs to recover quickly. Although certain types of disasters may seem improbable, it is still critically important to recognise even the slightest possibility of a disaster to ensure you can rapidly restore daily business functions even on rare occurrences.

For instance:

Hardware or Network Failure.

Hardware and network technologies are never 100 percent fool proof regardless of how modern or technologically advanced they are. What would happen if your business experiences a hardware or network outage?

Normally it would be costly to deal with the disruption and data loss. However, having a disaster recovery plan in place with an IT disaster recovery service provider, you can eliminate this risk at an affordable rate.

Virtual Machine or Application Failure.

Like hardware, virtual machines and software applications are not 100 percent fool proof. What would you do without access to software that performs critical business functions and staff access to virtual machines? How would you restore your organisation to normal business operations following a disaster?

Investing in manpower and technologies that address any failure in IT infrastructure can be costly in terms of IT capital expenses.

The only affordable way to avoid disruptions and application failure is to work with a disaster recovery service provider that can oversee data backup and ensure the proper data center technologies are deployed to help you to quickly restore operations. The service provider will also monitor the infrastructure as part of your contract to immediately detect any problems that may occur.

Human Error.

Like technology and software, humans are not perfect when it comes to performing daily business functions.

Humans make mistakes, accidentally delete data, and forget to save data before a crash occurs or overlook an important step that leads to data loss. It happens to all of us at one point or another.

If you have a disaster recovery plan in place, you can use incremental backup technologies that ensure you can restore the data to its original state. Deploying firewalls, anti-malware and antivirus solutions is only one part of the entire security scope.

A disaster recovery service can check and then double check for you to prevent data loss and breaches from occurring leaving you to focus on important business initiatives.

Loss of Customer Service and Retention.

Customer retention can be expensive however, trying to regain the trust of your customers following a disaster is even more costly, not to mention next to impossible.

Your customers want access 24/7/365 and any extended outage frustrates your customer and erodes their trust.

The average customer expects the information to be readily available at their convenience. If your business is experiencing IT problems and you cannot restore service within a reasonable amount of time, you risk losing your hard-earned customers to a competitor.

Instead, invest in disaster recovery services that will help to prevent this problem from occurring in the first place. It is a lot easier than trying to restore your customer base after they have jumped ship.

Natural Disaster.

As we all know, the weather can be very unpredictable despite the fact we have access to weather forecasts. Small businesses that have failed to plan for disaster recovery can find it nearly impossible to restore normal daily operations following a natural disaster. Studies have shown more than 75 percent of small businesses that do not have a disaster recovery plan in place shut their doors permanently following an extended outage.

These are only a few implications of failing to integrate a disaster recovery plan. Recognising the possible disasters that can happen in your area is the first step toward working with a recovery service provider. This will help you reduce the chances of disruption and provide you with peace of mind.

How Does Disaster Recovery Work?

Many business owners are also unaware of the time span it will take to recover following a disaster. An effective disaster recovery plan provides you with time measurements using two different objectives which are Recovery Point Objective (RPO) and Recovery Time Objective (RTO).

The Recovery Point Objective (RPO)

This defines how far back into data resources your business must recover to resume daily operations after a disaster. The RPO determines how frequent data must be backed up to ensure you are up and running again in the shortest time possible.

The Recovery Time Objective (RTO)

This determines the maximum amount of time your business can survive an outage before you begin to suffer financial loss from lack of critical business functions in addition to client and customer loss. The RTO helps you to define how much time you need to restore daily business operations.

The RPO and RTO are an essential part of disaster recovery planning as well as the technologies, strategies and procedures your business will require for successful and rapid restoration. This means the careful positioning of secondary data to ensure fast access and technologies that quickly bring data live from a backup appliance. Sometimes this process can take as long as 20 minutes if you do not have replication of data in place.

Preparing for a disaster is no small task

Disaster Recovery requires a detailed and comprehensive approach that involves hardware and software, communications, power, internet connectivity and networking equipment. Additionally, testing must be completed to ensure the disaster recovery plan meets your goals for RPO and RTO.

For many small businesses, disaster recovery planning represents a tall order that is sometimes out of reach from a budgetary standpoint as well as the time investment and manpower necessary to carry out the plan. Therefore, more businesses are opting to choose Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS).
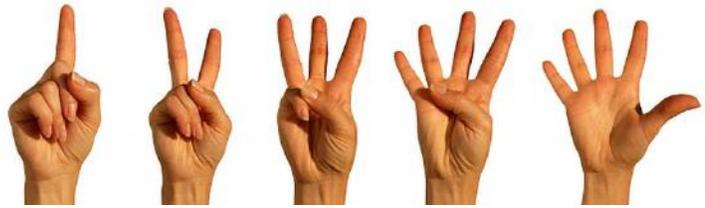
What is Disaster Recovery as a Service? DRaaS

DRaaS provides your business with the expertise and resources necessary to plan for a disaster at a fraction of what it would cost you to implement disaster recovery on your own. A disaster recovery service provider will work with you to tailor a plan that meets your specific business requirements.

In addition.

They have the technologies, certifications, and skilled expertise that ensures you can recover quickly following a disaster in addition to remaining within security compliance for your industry.

5 Key Advantages of Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS)

In a June 2017 study conducted by Gartner, "Disaster Recovery as a Service is now considered a mainstream cloud solution. Currently, Gartner estimates DRaaS to be a $2.02 billion business expected to reach $3.73 billion by 2021."

Disaster Recovery as a Service is important because it expands upon a typical backup solution. Many business owners confuse disaster recovery with a simple backup strategy that may or may not work in the event of a disaster. A few key advantages of working with a DRaaS provider include:

1. Affordable Cost.

Because the DRaaS industry is rapidly expanding, the competition has lowered the cost of integrating a disaster recovery plan and placed it within reach for most small businesses.

2. Disaster Recovery as a Service Simplifies Planning.

By working with a knowledgeable and trustworthy DRaaS provider, you have access to the necessary skills required for effective DR planning. Additionally, you never have to worry about capital outlay for expensive disaster recovery technologies and the staff needed to perform updates, track changes, carry out the most recent best practices in DR, perform infrastructure maintenance and more.

3. Flexibility and Scalability.

When you contract with a Disaster Recovery as a Service provider, you only pay for the services you use. You also can scale up or down as your businesses needs change because the services are available on demand. The type of recovery process is determined by your organisation along with assistance from the DRaaS provider.

4. Improved Efficiency.

When you opt to use DRaaS, the measurements for RPO and RTO can be significantly reduced for a more efficient disaster recovery plan. This is accomplished without having to endure a cost increase.

5. Better Security.

Although the disaster recovery services are offered from a remote data center, this does not mean that your data and applications are less secure. In fact, the opposite is true as DRaaS providers use advanced encryption technologies, physical site security and other processes such as two-factor authentication to ensure data and applications remain highly secure.

What about the Challenges?

In addition to the advantages discussed above, DRaaS significantly reduces challenges associated with backing up data and applications. When you work with a DRaaS provider, they will help your organisation through the challenges of moving data, testing and synchronising it with daily resources you use to operate your business.

Additionally.

Visibility and mobility is improved without the challenges associated with operating an on-premise data center. The DRaaS provider oversees and maintains continuous data visibility and mobility.

Storage management and data protection.

Another challenge involves storage management and data protection where new technologies and additional programming may be required to ensure fast restoration following a disaster. This is often a costly endeavor for small businesses. However, when you work with a DRaaS provider, they alleviate these challenges and headaches for you and at an affordable cost as well.

WARNING. Performing a full business recovery can be time consuming!

Many organisations fail to consider how long it can actually take to perform a full business recovery in the event of data loss or a disaster, especially if they do not have a tried and tested Disaster Recovery solution in place.
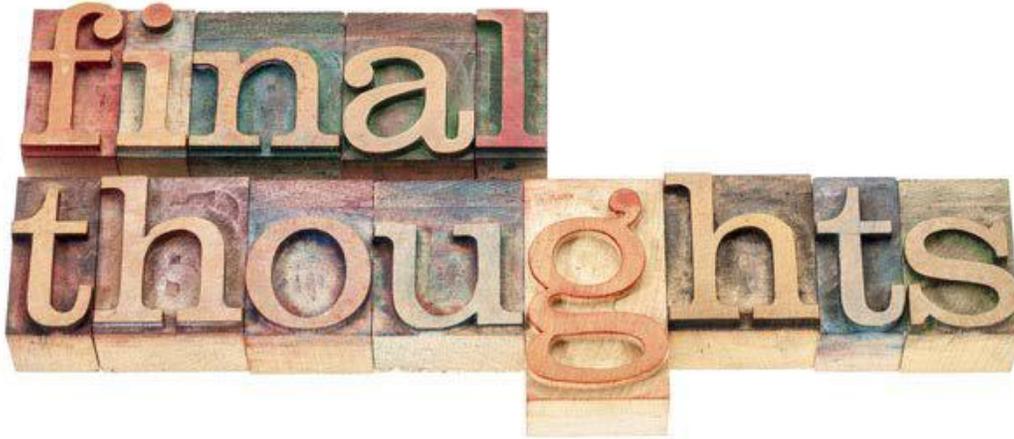
A single backup solution isn't enough.

It's a common misconception that a scheduled daily backup of your data is enough to quickly restore your IT systems back to their original state at the click of a mouse.

In practice, this simply isn't the case.

It is vitally important for you to have a proper Disaster recovery plan in place and to understand the exact time frames that are involved in completing a full business recovery. If you don't have a proper Disaster Recovery plan then the recovery process for returning to normal business operations can take days, or sometimes even weeks instead of hours.

There are many implications to this, including a negative impact on productivity and damaging financial losses that could be terminal for your business.

Final thoughts.

The bottom line is a disaster recovery plan is a must when it comes to the demands of the modern marketplace. If you develop a solid disaster recovery plan with affordable access to the latest technologies, the investment is well worth it following any type of disaster.

A DRaaS provider can be a valuable asset to your business continuity strategy and it will help you to save money, your business and your customers while providing you with the peace of mind that your business will not fail following a disaster.

Our Disaster Recovery testing service.

Our IT Department provides a full DR testing service for customers that wish to ensure they can return to normal business operations quickly and efficiently in the event of a disaster. By conducting a full range of tests, we will certify that your DR testing has been successful and your business is adequately protected in the event of a disaster.

The process.

We will examine each step of the disaster recovery process in intricate detail, completing the following steps:

1. We will complete a full business recovery test by performing a Disaster Recovery process in a controlled environment.
2. Once the testing process is complete, our DR testers will provide you with a fully comprehensive report of the disaster recovery test that details the time it takes to restore data, what data wasn't able to be restored and a list of recommendations for optimising your Disaster Recovery process.
3. We will make changes to the disaster recovery process and re-test any scheduled tasks that failed in step 2.

Disaster recovery testing should be scheduled throughout the year and incorporated into all planned maintenance and staff training. This will help to improve the resilience of your IT systems and better educate your staff on the importance Disaster Recovery.

Our Disaster Recovery as a service.

We provide a reliable and cost-effective cloud-based Disaster Recovery as a Service that enables businesses of all sizes to safeguard their business critical data and minimise downtime.

With our cloud-based Disaster Recovery as a Service, we'll get your IT Systems back up and running **quickly** and **efficiently** following an interruption of service, data loss, or a disaster.

How does it work?

Your physical IT systems are virtualised and replicated in a secure cloud environment. This includes your applications, email, data and network configurations.

This virtual network can be quickly activated in the event of a disaster, taking over from your internal IT systems in minutes. Your data and applications can also restored at any time from the cloud to a location of your choice.

DRaaS is easy to setup and maintain.

The physical deployment and ongoing maintenance associated with a traditional DR Service is replaced with a simple and secure, cloud-based automated backup and recovery process.

Our DRaaS solution is cost effective.

Disaster Recovery as a Service is a low-cost alternative to a traditional hardware-based disaster recovery solution. Cost of ownership is fully scalable and with our flexible subscription options, you only pay for the service elements that your business requires.

Improve the resilience of your IT and ensure business continuity.

If you have further questions about our Disaster Recovery testing and DRaaS solutions, or you'd simply like a no obligation quote for one or more these services then speak to a member of our business development team by calling 020 8501 7676.

Alternatively, you can email an overview of your requirements to info@ouritdept.co.uk
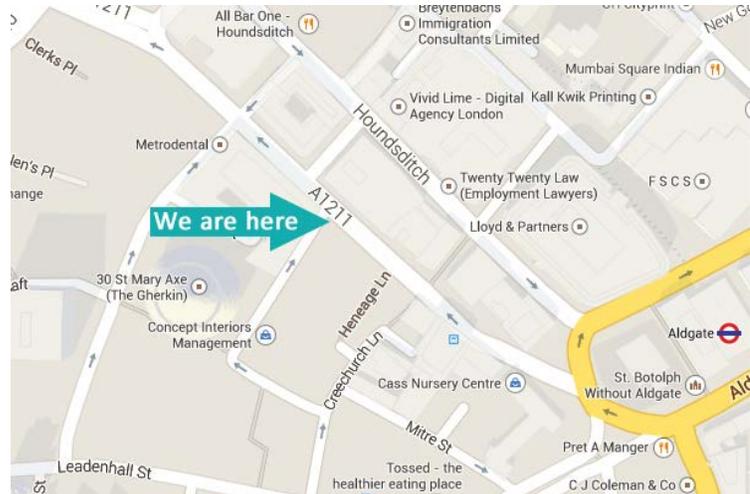
Our Accreditations.

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