

## Business Continuity Selling and Planning Essentials for MSPs

Backup and recovery is often cited in surveys as a top priority and concern among small to medium-sized businesses. However, when questioned, very few SMBs have true business continuity plans in place or have even considered them. What will they do when faced with an outage? What will they do in response to a real disaster?

Market research has shown time and time again that every company needs a business continuity strategy, especially given the significant financial and business repercussions a disaster can have. According to research from the Gartner Group, the average cost of a single incident of data loss can exceed \$10,000.

It is also very important to make sure businesses understand that the ripple effects of an outage can be far reaching, devastating or even fatal. Looking beyond financial costs, equally important consequences include lost revenue, damaged reputation, loss of competitive advantage, regulatory issues and possible litigation.

Despite the growing importance of business continuity, many firms are still unaware of how to approach the challenge posed by disruptive events. MSPs need to be trusted advisors for their clients and guide customers through the key steps of an effective plan. Furthermore, business continuity planning must be a holistic approach, which encompasses not just technology but the operational and strategic aspects of a business to ensure that day-to-day activities continue to function in the event of a disaster. Steps for a successful plan include:

- Disaster recovery audit – discovers what is in place today and where the major gaps are
- Business impact assessment – examines existing business processes that keep the business running; determines RTO for critical services and RPO for business data; and assesses financial, reputational and regulatory/compliance risks associated with prolonged downtime and/or disaster event
- Disaster recovery plan – documents “what-if” scenarios and focuses on the recovery processes of IT systems that support business functions
- Implementing technology solutions – deploying integrated solutions that combine intelligent remote monitoring and management with advanced backup and disaster recovery
- Test disaster recovery scenarios – schedule disaster recovery tests throughout the year; practice makes perfect
- Train and maintain – learn from recovery tests and update documentation and business continuity plans accordingly

When selecting a technology solution to support your business continuity plans, ask the following critical questions from vendors:

- Does it provide continuous disk-based, block-level backups?
- Can it perform rapid restore and recovery of servers and desktops?
- How quickly can protected machines be virtualized?
- Can it support bare-metal restores?
- Will it replicate data backups to a cloud storage facility with full virtualization support?
- Does it offer an integrated remote monitoring and management solution?

Acting as the trusted advisor, MSPs can leverage business continuity to open new opportunities and elevate conversations from price/cost to value-based selling. Ideally, a fully managed end-to-end solution, combined with a comprehensive business continuity plan, enables MSPs to drive higher margins and longer lasting relationships with customers.

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