

Free Tech Report
Executive IT Info Series

*"Virtual CTO" Tim Gillen reports on
current business technology issues*

Creating a Business Continuity Plan for Your Small Business

Is your business prepared for any type of disaster? Even though small businesses may not have as many employees or as much equipment, they are still as vulnerable to disaster as a large corporation. If your business office were to be destroyed by a tornado, you could lose valuable business if you don't plan ahead. Many businesses don't want to take the time and the expense to prepare a business continuity plan, but can you really afford not to make one?

Make a List of All Possible Disasters

The best place to start is to list different types of disasters and try to determine what could be lost in each case, and what you can do to prevent that loss. A flood will require different strategies from a power outage or a fire. Next, try to estimate how long it would take, and how much it would cost, for you to get your business up and running again.

Communication

The middle of a crisis is not the time to frantically search for phone numbers. Even small businesses need emergency contact numbers. Have all emergency contact numbers posted or programmed into every phone. Do you have an alternate mode of communication should your main phone lines shut down? Could your clients seamlessly contact you without ever knowing that your office was in the middle of disaster recovery? The same principal applies to email and fax. Making arrangements regarding communication are critical to keeping your business running smoothly. Communicating with staff and clients can mean the difference between complete shutdown, or minimal a business interruption.

Preserving Your Data

In the event of a disaster, it is important to know that everything you need to function as a business is available. Identify all vital systems, documents, and data. While it is important for every business to backup their data on a regular basis, what if a fire destroyed your office? For this reason, offsite storage is critical to preserving your business' valuable information. Offsite data storage allows to access to all of your stored data from any computer and from anywhere in the world. ***(See our Free Report on Disaster Recovery for more details)***

A Temporary Worksite

It is also important to plan for a temporary worksite. Depending on the goods or services your business offers, can you continue smooth operation if your office is shut down? Storing products in a second location can allow you to maintain your regular business schedule.

Test Your Plan

One of the keys to successful disaster recovery is testing your business continuity plan on a regular basis. It is important that you and your staff know exactly what to do, where to go, and how to access the necessary items you need to keep your business running smoothly to the outside world, even if you are standing in the middle of a disaster. Schedule regular plan tests to ensure that everyone in your office is on the same page and ready should disaster strike. Hopefully, you will never have to use your business continuity plan, but it is smart business to be prepared for any emergency should one arise.

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