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IT Radix Resource

We make IT work for you

The Importance of an Incident Response Plan

Are you a Comic-Con nerd? If you have never been to a convention, it truly is a great experience. The amount of time, effort and planning these folks put into their costumes is a sight to behold.

Our team member, Mike Oster, looked on in awe as his daughter was getting ready for a Comic-Con Convention. Planning every part of the 3-day convention: what to wear each day, who she would be meeting and when, what exhibits and events she would be attending, etc. He watched as she started putting all her friends' names and numbers on a piece of paper along with what times/places they would meet up and what they would wear each day…she just wanted to be prepared. Apparently, cell service is spotty at best in the convention hall, and she wanted to be able to find her friends if she needed to. Why would she need to find her friends? There are lots of reasons… she might want to leave early, there might be a change in the schedule or, heaven forbid, a real emergency of some sort. They all agree, in advance, on where/when they will meet and what they will do if anything changes. Unbeknownst to her, his daughter was making an Incident Response Plan!

Of course, in the business world, an Incident Response Plan (IRP) would be put together for much different reasons than maximizing their experience at a convention. In the real world, a business puts together an IRP so everyone in the organization knows exactly what their response will be to a potential cybersecurity incident.

An IRP should outline the process that everyone will follow in response to different security incidents. The plan should outline the different types of incidents that may occur: data leaks, ransomware, phishing attacks, etc. and what the response will be to each. How will communications be handled and with whom? Does law enforcement need to be contacted? How about the legal team or cyber insurance broker?

But do all companies, large or small, really need an IRP? Absolutely! It does not need to be lengthy or overly complicated, but it is necessary and important. Most companies will likely be relying on outside vendors or tech experts to help them through but they still need a plan. Who will make the call? Who is their backup? How will contact be made? What if email is

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Take Note

Get Disaster Ready

September is National Preparedness Month. Does your business have a "keep working plan" in the event of a disaster?

***Momentum NJ* Magazine**

In case you missed it, check out our latest edition to learn more about current technology trends and business concerns of local organizations like yours.
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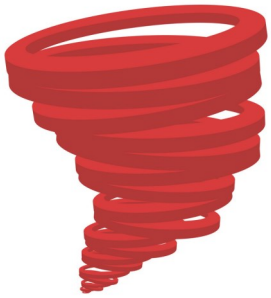

Protecting Your Business from Data Disasters

Data is everything to a business in this day and age—which means if you lose access or control of your data, you lose everything!

As dramatic as that statement might sound, the data backs that up. According to several sources, 93% of companies, no matter how big they are, are *out of business within one year* if they suffer a major data disaster without having first formulated a strategy for combating it. And since 68% of businesses don't have any sort of plan for that worst-case scenario, it means losing data would be a death knell for most of the businesses in the country.

By taking the following steps, you can ensure that you have a rock-solid disaster recovery plan in place.

Step 1: Know How a Disaster Recovery Plan Is Different From a Business Continuity Plan

The main difference between these two types of plans is that while business continuity plans are *proactive*, disaster recovery plans are *reactive*.

More specifically, a business continuity plan is a strategy by which a business ensures that, no matter what disaster befalls it, it can continue to operate and provide products and services to its customers. A disaster recovery plan, on the flip side, is a strategy by which businesses can back up and recover critical data should it get lost, corrupted or held for ransom.

Step 2: Gather Information and Support

In order to get the ball rolling on your disaster recovery plan, start with executive buy-in. This means that everyone needs to be brought in on executing the plan in case your company suffers a data disaster. When everyone is aware of the possibility of a data disaster, it allows for cross-functional collaboration in the creation process—a necessary step if you want to prevent breaches in all parts of your systems.

You need to account for all elements in your tech systems when you're putting together your disaster recovery plan, including your systems, applications and data. Be sure to account for any issues involving the physical security of your servers as well as physical access to your systems. You'll need a plan in case those are compromised.

In the end, you'll need to figure out which processes are absolutely necessary to keep up and running during a worst-case scenario when your capability is limited.

Step 3: Create Your Strategy

When everyone is on board with the disaster recovery plan and they understand their systems' vulnerabilities, as well as which systems need to stay up and running, it's time to actually put together the game plan. In order to do that, you'll need to have a good grip on your budget, resources, tools and partners.

If you're a small business, you might want to consider your budget and the timeline for the recovery process. These are good starting points for putting together your plan, and doing so will also give you an idea of what you can tell your customers to expect while you get your business back up to full operating capacity.

Step 4: Test the Plan

You'll never know if you're prepared until you actually test your disaster recovery plan. Running through the steps with your employees helps them familiarize themselves with the steps they'll need to take in the event of a real emergency, and it will help identify any areas of your plan that need improvement. By the time an actual data disaster befalls your business, your systems and employees will easily know how to spring into action.

These are the quick actions that you will need to take to make a successful, robust disaster recovery plan:

- Get executive buy-in for the plan.
- Research/analyze the different systems in your business to know how they could be impacted.
- Prioritize systems that are absolutely necessary to the functioning of your business.
- Test your disaster recovery plan to evaluate its effectiveness.

Complete these steps to ensure that your business will survive any data disaster that comes your way.

Introducing… Diane Sekelsky

Diane comes to IT Radix with her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Thomas Edison State University. Diane has many years of experience in the business world working as a project/administrative assistant and customer service representative in a variety of fields including engineering, accounting and pharmaceutical.

Diane is part of our administrative team and handles various responsibilities including customer service, assisting with monthly billing, and marketing endeavors including proofreading and mailing monthly newsletters and email blasts along with other administrative functions. Diane says her favorite part of working at IT Radix is the relationships she has formed with co-workers, applying her skillset, and learning new computer skills.

Diane's favorite quote

"What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us." – Henry David Thoreau

When not working hard, Diane enjoys cooking, mostly Italian and Mexican food, and her favorite dish is Eggplant Parmigiana. Diane also spends time reading non-fiction books, listening to classic rock, and spending time with family and friends. Diane currently resides in Morris County with her husband and two cats.

Diane's personal philosophy: Respect others enough to be conscious of how your words and actions affect them and choose the best way forward. Acknowledge that everyone has the same right to their opinion as you and may express themselves in different ways.

"My plan will defeat our competition once and for all. I need a volunteer to infiltrate their break room and make decaf!"

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down? Having a plan in place will answer all these questions if or when the worst happens.

It can start with a simple checklist:

- ✓ Have (and drill) a customized Incident Response Plan.
- ✓ Identify who should be on the Response Team and what their responsibilities are.
- ✓ Gauge whether there are sufficient IT resources to respond to an incident or whether third-party support would be required.
- ✓ Document and practice lockdown procedures (for both internal systems and clients).
- ✓ Have cybersecurity insurance and/or lawyer(s).
- ✓ Ensure that a clean system is ready for restore, perhaps involving a complete reimage of a system or a full restore from a clean backup.
- ✓ Audit backups and practice backup restoration.
- ✓ Know how to retrieve/request access to relevant event and activity logs.
- ✓ Prepare a communication strategy and lawyer-approved scripts/ templates for quick use.

Of course, a full Incident Response Plan needs to be tailored to a business' team and specific needs.

Don't know where to start? Give IT Radix a call and we can help get you as prepared as a fan heading off to Comic-Con!

From the desk of Cathy Coloff

September, for many, means the end of summer and "back to business" with the return of kids to school. While many of us enjoy time off and summer vacations (myself included), I know that cyber criminals do not stop. In fact, they often take advantage of our relaxed, guards-down attitudes. This is why we at IT Radix, like a broken record (a phrase that young people don't truly understand these days 😉), keep emphasizing the importance of security and being prepared for disasters. Those of us, like myself, who have been around for a number of years have seen a variety of IT disasters or incidents—many of which could be avoided.

When I went on vacation this summer, I brought both my iPad and my laptop even though I was tempted to travel light and leave my laptop behind. As I was reminded—what would I do if someone in my family got COVID and we were forced to stay at our vacation destination for longer than planned? With my laptop, I could easily and safely work remotely pretty much anywhere.

Also, before traveling, I made sure to have all my security alerts and cyber protections in place so that while I was vacationing, I could safely use my iPad to find new places to explore, securely make reservations and book outings and lightly keep up on email. Was it a bit inconvenient dealing with our mult-factor authentication prompts? A little, but for me, the peace of mind the added security brought was totally worth it. I'm still relishing my memories of our family vacation in Bermuda even as we all get "back to business."

"A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions."

— Unknown

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Our Very Own Superhero

An interview with Ashleigh Boissonault:

IT Radix: What draws you to Comic-Con conventions?

Ashleigh: I was drawn to New York Comic-Con because I've always been a fan of comic books. The conventions are always fun, and they give me an opportunity to cosplay a character I love. I have gone to a few conventions, dressed as several characters, but my favorite character that I have gone as is Riddick from "The Chronicles of Riddick" series.

IT Radix: How did this experience enhance your life?

Ashleigh: Meeting artists I love and expressing my appreciation for their work is a very cool experience. Also, when I dressed up as Riddick, I was going through chemotherapy and lost my hair, so playing a bald character was perfect! It helped me take something negative and turn it into something positive, making me feel even more empowered! I kicked cancer's butt! 🙂

Ashleigh has proven that superheroes are REAL!

