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Who's Afraid Of The Big Bad Backup?

The Top 5 business Backup
fears and how best to tackle
them.

The Backup landscape has changed! It's a fact. Although traditional on-premise backup solutions, including tapes and disks, are still in use, the advent of Cloud has revolutionised the industry and paved the way for businesses to access a multitude of solutions and service providers.

With this comes a degree of confusion – “What solution best suits my requirements?” – as well as an element of fear – “What solution am I least afraid of?”. Traditionally speaking, emotion, in this case fear, typically drives the end solution used – so it's imperative for business leaders, including IT personnel, to understand and address the fears surrounding backup technology, to be able to make a sound judgement on the appropriateness of any given solution.

The complications of Backup

Backup is most often considered a secondary service and is only ever used to prove compliance with a regulatory body or relied upon in a significant DR event. Therefore, business leaders are normally satisfied with a statement from the IT department that everything is protected, even though they rarely have any meaningful way of confirming this is the case. In addition, the expense of Backup can sometimes be difficult to quantify, especially when an assumption is made that all of costs for an on-premise solution are catered for at the point at which the infrastructure is implemented, which simply isn't true – see our [Backup Cost Guide](#) for more information.

With this in mind, businesses need to take a closer look at their individual requirements for a Backup solution and face up to the fears they hold which may otherwise be impeding their ability to adopt a more suitable solution.

Top 5 business Backup fears

1. Loss of data

Most organisations don't actually get a chance to restore the data in a test environment outside of an incident or DR situation. This could mean that at the point at which a business really needs to recover data, it is either incomplete or not usable at all – a huge fear for almost every company with the potential for massive impact on the business as a whole. In reality, a more likely scenario is that the effort to get the data back is significant which still impacts business operations. To compound the problem, many organisations don't think about policy before solution – i.e. they take the best Recovery Point Objective (RPO) that the chosen technology will deliver, rather than consider & formalise the maximum amount of data they are prepared to lose and choose a technology which delivers to that level – therefore choose a solution which doesn't actually provide the level of protection necessary to mitigate the risks & fears of data loss for their particular requirement.

2. Complicated recovery

Depending on the Backup solution in place, recovery can consume a significant amount of resource to restore the data, including checking that the version of the server is compatible as well as deciding on a complete system recovery or DR recovery. Additionally, the business will be heavily reliant on the resources responsible for recovery – if this is internal then they must be given enough time to test and confirm recovery processes, where as if the responsible parties are external then the contracts and SLA's supporting the solution need to be meaningful and strong enough to guarantee success. In the case of using tape technology, further complications can arise as the right tapes must first be identified before the data can be mounted to a test area and the responsible party either extracts the data needed or completely recovers the entire system – which is understandably a complicated and time consuming process. When using disk based backup, the real challenge is to ensure the data is replicated successfully offsite and that sufficient space and bandwidth is available to restore the data when needed.

3. Data integrity

How do we know that the data we are recovering is the correct version and contains the specific data we are looking for? Typically, this is discovered at the most stressful time – when a business is actually trying to recover the data. In addition, depending on the technology used a business needs to ensure that any corrupted data or versions of data are stored appropriately so that the right version can be easily accessed when needed.

4. Security of data

When using a cloud service, an often cited fear centres around security – where is the data stored and is there any regulatory compliance to think of? Is the solution using industry leading technology or heavily reliant on the capability of the partner to make it work? How can we be sure that our data is not mixed up with someone else's and that only the right people have access to the data? Which are all valid points, but often stem from lack of knowledge rather than a lack of functionality or compatibility. On the other hand, for on-premise solutions a business must consider whether the tapes & offsite backups are secure or if utilising a disk based solution, how they ensure there are multiple points in time to recover from.

5. Costs

Cloud based services are typically perceived as expensive whereas on-premise solutions are cheap. The truth is that they are closely comparable but carry different benefits. It is true, however, that a business cannot just outsource the problem, they must consider their RPO and Recovery Time Objectives (RTO) inline with business and IT needs. After all, the data set will only ever grow so a business needs to carefully consider how long they really need to retain it for and parts of its data they really need to protect. Conversely, on-premise solutions have a lot of hidden costs in people's time, hardware & software including maintenance in addition to any offsite costs in DCs or tape storage solutions which ensures the business has copies in a safe place. Cloud based services will force you to evaluate your policies and will provide assurances in the event of restoring the data, they can also provide additional Disaster Recovery (DR) services and benefits if you choose the solution provider wisely. However, on-premise solutions can work and are appropriate for some businesses provided they are routinely looked after and the IT department is given enough money and time to properly maintain them.

Stats: Fears of IT terminology

Fears inhibiting the adoption of Cloud solutions can incredibly even include the terminology used in the description of the service itself. In a survey of IT managers, **53%** of respondents confirmed that the term “Backup on demand” helps to ensure their proposal is met positively by their superiors, in comparison to **15%** for “Backup as a service”.

Source: Mozy

Realising the benefits of Cloud

The technology and marketplace has advanced significantly in the last few years and businesses no longer need to think of backups in isolation from DR or high availability as the best Cloud solutions / services will now incorporate all of them and more. Moving to a 'pay as you use' model can also ensure that every business thinks about the data they are creating and in turn the relevant level of protection necessary for it. To illustrate this point, let's consider how file and financial data is handled; with file data, users will typically have their own local copy which is likely to also be stored on a file server. This file server will be backed up and / or replicated to a 2nd location with copies kept for months or years. Finance data, however, will be stored within the finance application and will be backed up a number of times before being retained for a set period of time to comply with regulations. With this scenario in mind, when a 'pay as you use' model is adopted, the individual business can determine exactly how important these two sets of data are and therefore what level of protection is required for each – which is rarely the same, therefore cost savings can be achieved.

In summary, if a business knows that their current Backup solution is operating well and provides the levels of protection required then they are ahead of many organisations. If a business does not know, consideration of converting the spend to a cloud based service would be worthwhile, which will force the business to ensure that it understands that the data is appropriately protected whilst providing full visibility of all costs.

The prospect of moving backup solutions can be a fear in itself, but rest assured, by choosing the right partner this too is nothing to be feared. Find out how easy it is to move to [Cloud Backup](#) by reading our [Switching Guide](#).

We're always available to discuss any IT Project and would welcome the opportunity to talk it through. Get in touch now and we're confident we will find the perfect solution for your business.

[Get in touch today.](#)