



**Backup and Disaster Recovery**  
**A CRITICAL ELEMENT**  
**OF SMB SUCCESS**



**Over the past few years**, seemingly all

verticals have experienced an increase in major unplanned data outages caused by a variety of catalysts, ranging from computer viruses and power failures to natural disasters and system administration errors. At the same time, small and medium-size businesses (SMBs) are utilizing information technology far more than ever before, with computer systems currently considered a critical component of their business. These trends bear out a need for solutions designed to back up digital information and, subsequently, to limit data loss, as well as to aid in the recovery of data. This White Paper will examine how Backup and Disaster Recovery (BDR) options based on a Managed Services platform fulfill such a need, as well as why they are of particular value to SMBs and how VARs can select the proper solution for their clients.

## **BDR Solutions, the SMB Enterprise and VARs**

Whether it involves email, accounting data, patient or client files, company records or other documentation, major data loss can have a devastating effect on businesses of any size. In *Management Systems For the Information Age* (McGraw-Hill, 2003), authors Maeve Cummings, Stephen Haag and Donald McCubbrey cite a study whose results demonstrate a strong correlation between a significant loss of “computer records” and companies’ ability to survive going forward. Of companies that had experienced an incident of this type, 43% never reopened, and 51% closed within two years. A mere 6% of companies survived over the long term.

Moreover, even losses of lesser magnitude have the potential to cripple businesses, at least partially. In many cases a lack of access to mission-critical data renders it difficult if not impossible, for businesses to properly service customers, placing them at risk of losing market share to the competition. Adherence to regulations surrounding documentation and record- keeping becomes equally problematic.

Given these risks, most large companies spend between 2% and 4% of their IT budget on disaster recovery planning, with BDR solutions comprising a portion of their investment.

However, unlike large businesses, most SMBs can not afford to implement optimal in-house BDR strategies and solutions. Consequently, they remain at an even greater risk than their counterparts of being put out of business because of any major loss of data. A BDR solution delivered in a managed service - and hence, more affordable - format is the most viable antidote to such risk.

Meanwhile, for VARs that service the SMB market, since business owners, controllers and IT administrators are looking for a cost-effective solution that addresses their needs in this area, they gain access to many more new clients who are willing to discuss this. After selling the new clients on this Backup and Disaster Recovery solution, the solution providers can easily begin promoting their additional services. This could start with “remote server care” for the critical servers that are being backed up, and then move into network monitoring and management. Additionally, desktop management and asset tracking becomes a natural offshoot of these services. Providing Pro-Active support helps to reduce the long term service costs for an organization. So while protecting your data from disaster is a critical component of your total strategy it is important to consider other support options as well to add to your total support package.

“Managed BDR solutions are not only a great way to introduce managed services to our accounts, but they provide our customers with a higher level of support that will greatly reduce their ongoing support costs over time. Comparing this kind of two prong approach to disaster recovery far surpasses the older legacy tape and removable drive backup solutions at a very reasonable cost.”

## **Selecting A BDR Solution: Best Practices**

While a Backup and Disaster Recovery solution is clearly a critical component of every company’s technology arsenal, Computer Connections follows a strategic approach to selecting the appropriate product(s) to offer our customers. In determining the best products to use to support our customers with we consider the following items:

- Solutions that offers limited capabilities, and/or are poorly configured, will defeat the purpose of implementing a BDR solution.
- A viable BDR solution should cover all the computing platforms in the business that it is being utilized with.
- The solution should provide protection for all data, whether that data resides on a servers, laptops or desktop computers.
- Off-site and on-site backups should occur at regular intervals to meet individual clients’ needs.
- Backups should occur rapidly and seamlessly to avoid interfering with server performance while the backup process is being executed.



- For best results, off-site backup should be provided at a hardened, secure data center, and that has a high level of physical security in place along with internet and power redundancy.
- Data should be secure on-site as well as off-site by using a high level of encryption. The encryption key should be kept in a secure location either by the end-client themselves, or their respective solution provider.
- The Backup and Disaster Recovery solution should restore server images to dissimilar hardware. This is essential, as it prevents VARs from being limited by the type of new server that will be installed.

- It's important to know the recovery time frame following a server crash or catastrophe. The procedure for rebounding after the latter two disasters must not be complex, but rather comprised of a few simple, straightforward steps.
- The end client should ensure that there are no hidden fees - the cost to maintain and manage the solution on a weekly, monthly, and annual basis - plus any labor expenditures - should be taken into consideration before signing a deal.
- The end clients should take into account the provider's availability. Are they being provided with coverage 24 hours per day, 365 days per year?

## Case Study

# BACK FROM THE BRINK

A regional, Non-Profit agency in the Greensburg area was in need of a business continuity solution. The firm turned to Computer Connections, for assistance.

Because of the firm's organizational structure, several remote sites derive email from a set of servers in the main office. Email is critical in nature, since this is their main source of communication between branch offices. Also their central client management system needed high availability and client documentation is important for historical tracking.

The organization had several solutions in place to address redundancy, including an Intel Modular Server with multiple blades, using virtualization techniques to better take advantage of their server environment. They needed a secure backup solution with offsite storage capabilities. We opted for a dual ARCA setup with the ARCA backup units in different offices. Not only will the ARCA unit in the main office act as the initial backup device but it will also feed data to the remotely located ARCA unit in the

background ensuring a proper offsite storage procedure.

Because of the nature of these devices they not only communicate with each other to make sure they are synchronized, but they also allow Computer Connections to remote monitor them to make sure they remain healthy and functioning properly.

Not only are these systems providing backup services but they can also become virtualized servers in case of an emergency with one of the servers that they are backing up.

During the first two month period of the new server/ backup solution implementation we saw that one of the virtual servers that were providing print services to the network became corrupted. Within 30 minutes we were able to diagnose and quickly bring up a copy of the virtualized server and have the customer printing again.

The combination of virtualization and the remote access to their system allowed us to quickly restore their system in minutes.

## The Computer Connections Advantage

A comprehensive Backup and Disaster Recovery solution for Windows servers, offered by Computer Connections, answers the needs of our clients as noted above.

A Network-Attached Storage (NAS) device configured with CCI's proprietary applications allows us to have business continuity needs addressed. It helps ensure business continuity by providing a stand-by server on-site and providing optional off-site backup of critical data.

We deploy the device at our clients' locations. The data can be sent off site to a data center located on the East Coast, and CCI's Network Partner Operations Center can monitor its progress and also assist us with any troubleshooting if backups are not occurring as planned. The data integrity is also monitored on the NAS device and at the data center.

In addition to providing frequent data backup, the device enables us to remotely activate a stand-by server functionality on the Network-Attached Storage system in the event of a server crash. This minimizes any business disruption by ensuring access to any and all critical applications.

Computer Connections can select from several device models, depending on your needs. For example, the base model has 400 gigabytes of storage and can be used to back up a single server, while the Xtreme model features 2 terabytes of storage capacity and can be deployed to back up as many as 10 servers.

## The Bottom Line

Heightened awareness of business continuity issues has not only moved to the forefront of companies' priorities in recent years; it has risen to the top of the list as threats to the availability of data continue to multiply. As the volume of mission-critical information stored electronically grows, so does the importance of protecting and rapidly restoring irreplaceable data. SMBs face myriad of choices and challenges in planning for the future, but the right Backup and Disaster Recovery solution, implemented by us for you, can help to minimize obstacles associated with data storage as well as pave the way for business continuity down the road.

## About Computer Connections and its partnership with Zenith Infotech

Our partnership with Zenith gives us the ability to provide our customers with full 24x7x365 support for their network environment. You have the opportunity to use the products that make the best sense for you today and to grow into a model that provides you with a deeper level of support as time goes on. You can easily test the services and out for a short time and if they are not fitting within your framework step back and try another product mix. With our partnership with Zenith Infotech we offer you the most comprehensive package of services at a very reasonable cost. The reason is scale. We are able to leverage pricing discounts by the large number of customers that we represent. As more and more of our customers commit to this program we will be able to commit more of our personal resources towards this type of support and be able to provide faster, more cost effective support for your organization. We let technology help us to keep these costs down and your level of support as high as possible.

