

I feel obligated to add a disclosure to the beginning of this article letting you know it is a little more technical than I usually prefer. On the bright side, it is chuck full of valuable information concerning backup solutions. Enjoy!

Backup: Navigating a Maze of Solutions

With the continuity of your business resting on its shoulders, your backup solution can be one of the most important aspects of your IT infrastructure. There are so many different backup solutions that many small business owners feel a little overwhelmed when trying to decide which service to utilize. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of backup solutions on the market and without an understanding of the distinguishing features of these services, deciding which solution is best for you can be a daunting task. This article will help you determine which solution will be most cost-effective for your small business.

Onsite Backup

Onsite Backup is the most common backup solution for small businesses because of its low cost. The reason is that you are just buying a device with a simple data storage format and the software to go along with it.

You also have the ability to store these backup devices offsite for added protection against fire and theft or any other disaster your area is prone to experience. The speed of the backup is also a benefit to an onsite solution. Instead of requiring valuable bandwidth to transfer data, via the internet, to an offsite location, an onsite solution quickly downloads the data from the server directly.

The cons to an onsite device include the fact that it can get cumbersome to transfer devices from one location to another and that the format in which the data is archived requires a computer savvy person to retrieve. Therefore if you constantly need to access the backed up information, it can become very costly.

Offsite Backup

Offsite backup services are great because if anything were to happen to your company's office, such as a fire, flood or any other disaster, your critical data is safe. As soon as an internet connection is available, you can begin to restore your lost data. Most backup services offer different methods of performing the backup and they should be considered when choosing one service over another. Some backup services allow you to back up your data constantly throughout the day, so if you accidentally delete a file, you can access your backed up data and retrieve it. Other companies simply allow backups to be performed nightly or on the weekend. You can decide which you prefer and go with the company that is best for you.

Another benefit to this type of backup service is that there is typically no equipment to buy. Because of the fact that all your data is sent to a data center via the internet, there is no need for you to purchase expensive devices to store your data on. The downside is that in the long run this type of service will cost the most. You can expect to pay anywhere from \$2/GB to \$5/GB for backed up data. Be careful with the companies that claim you can back up unlimited amounts of data for a low monthly or yearly fee. These companies are more directed toward the backup of consumer data (like photos and personal

documents) rather than business records. Hence, because of the volume of data your business might need backed up, you might find yourself being charged overages even though you have an “unlimited” plan. Always read the fine print.

One aspect that needs to be researched is the accessibility of your data once it has been backed up. If one service is more expensive than another, it is most likely due to the ease of access to backed up data. If your company needs to have constant access to backed up data, then you need to make sure the company you use has a user friendly access program so data retrieval is as simple as possible. Most companies offer a trial period, so make sure you take advantage of this before signing up for any service.

Hybrid Solutions:

There are solutions that offer the best of both worlds. They allow you to store your data onsite and also send it to a secure data center to safeguard your business against anything short of an apocalyptic disaster. Since such disasters are not too frequent, a hybrid solution is the best choice for a company that would be crippled if its backed up data was lost. It is not as expensive as purely offsite solutions because, typically, you purchase the onsite backup device from the same company that offers offsite backup at a discounted rate. So you get the peace of mind of having your data constantly backed up and stored in two different locations.

Because of the price of the onsite storage device, the upfront cost is often a deterrent for potential customers. However, what many people don't realize is that with the discounted monthly rate for offsite backup, this initial cost is quickly recouped. Hybrid backup is more expensive than just a simple onsite solution, but the advantages can far outweigh the costs. Access to data is simple and readily available, and you have the assurance that your organization will continue even after complete data loss. Monitoring of whether scheduled backups are occurring is easier and notifications are sent to inform you if there is ever an issue.

Each business has unique needs and a solution that works great for one company could be inappropriate for another company. When deciding whether to utilize off-site, on-site, or a hybrid solution, be sure that you examine your needs carefully in order to get the best solution for your money. If you would like more information on backup solutions or help in deciding which solution would be best for your company feel free to [contact us](#).

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For 16+ years we have been discovering new cost effective IT solutions for all businesses. We offer flexible services ranging from break/fix for smaller companies to complete managed services for larger businesses.

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