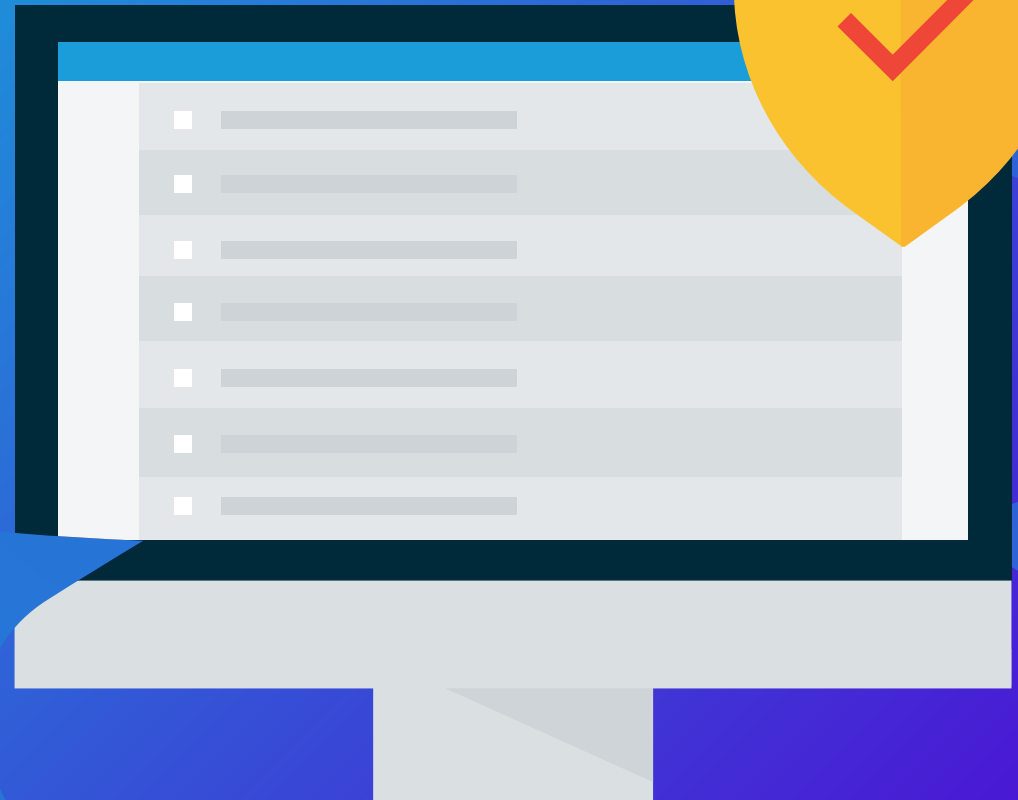# Backup and Data Protection for the SMB

What They Need To Know

Introduction

Today's small to mid-sized businesses, or SMBs, are creating more data than ever. Their growth calls for robust solutions to back up their business-critical data.
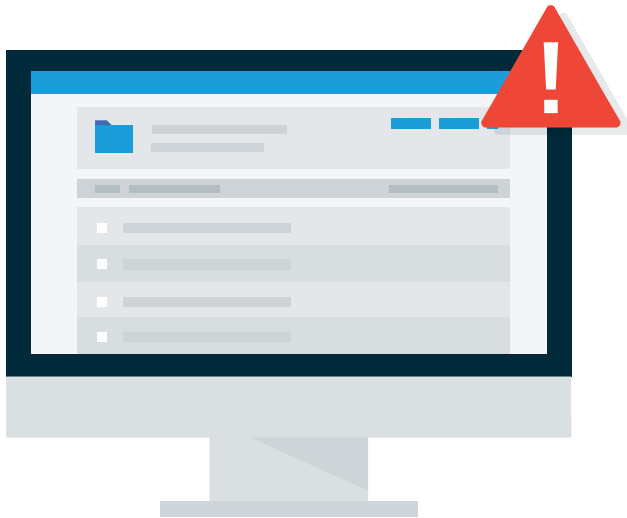
Due to limited financial and IT resources, it is crucial for SMBs to know exactly what to look for in a backup solution. In this guide we'll be outlining key criteria for SMBs to keep in mind when seeking out total data protection.

Before we jump into that criteria, it is important to understand why backup is critical for an SMB.

Successful backup is the foundation for disaster recovery and business continuity. Without it, recovery and continuity cannot exist. Technologies that were created decades ago to store data are simply not enough. Antiquated methods, like tape backup, aren't going to ensure data retention and recovery during business critical time windows.

When choosing a backup solution, SMBs should look for 6 important pieces of criteria: comprehensiveness, ease of use, recoverability, performance and reliability, affordability, and scalability.

Hardware systems do sometimes fail, and at that point users can rely on instant virtualization of failed systems. The strongest of providers will be able to convert a backup into a running system in a matter of seconds.

Comprehensiveness

Small businesses generally do not have a dedicated IT department that can manage separate backup, recovery and business continuity solutions. Does the solution provide key functionality that is seamlessly integrated? A combination of on-premises and cloud-based services offer the best total protection for businesses of all sizes, especially small businesses.

Ease of Use

As SMB employees tend to take on multiple roles at work, managing IT shouldn't be one of them. Solutions that offer intelligent user interfaces and are also supported by a vast network of managed service providers are often the best choices.

Recoverability

Most SMBs carry less than a month of operating costs in cash, so downtime can quite literally 'break the bank'. Instant recovery capabilities can remedy this. If your hardware systems fail, users can rely on instant virtualization of failed systems to stay operational. The strongest of providers will be able to convert a backup into a running system in a matter of seconds. In the event of a natural disaster, a total system replication may be necessary. This creates a complete infrastructure on which to host your business.

Performance and Reliability

It makes sense that quicker and more frequent backups limit data loss. So when choosing a reliable solution, SMBs should choose one that is performs backups very often. An ideal solution is incremental backup, where the technology adds what you've changed or deleted, rather than backing up the entire volume of data repeatedly. This adds to a solution's ability to perform more quickly.
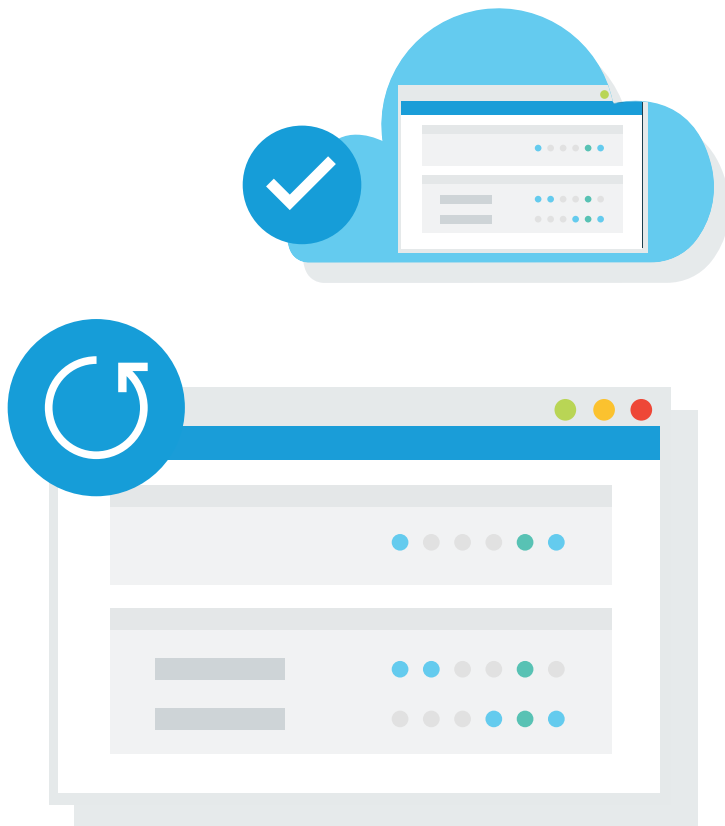
Affordability

SMBs likely do not have huge IT budgets. It's common to outsource for an entire IT department, but that can be pricey. With limited financial and technical resources, choosing a backup solution can be a trying task. Many opt for cheaper solutions, which provide them less functionality. Cheaper solutions may seem like the right call in the moment, but down the road it can be quite costly when the solution doesn't do all that an SMB needed to prevent downtime. It's important to find the most cost effective and affordable solution - which won't require sacrificing significant features and capabilities.

Scalability

Successful small businesses often grow into larger businesses. With that comes the creation of more and more data. Alongside this growth is a need for more advanced backup and business continuity solutions. Selecting a provider who works with businesses of all sizes, promises SMBs a bigger selection of products and services to meet their needs as they evolve.

With image-based backup users no longer have to pick and choose which files are backed up or worry about saving the most recent draft to the shared/ backup folder.

Specific Features To Look For

Now that you know what to look for when selecting backup solutions, we'll dive deeper into the technologies and features that add to more complete solutions. When it comes to total data protection, SMBs should be on the lookout for these features to ensure their data is not only backed up but available in the case of a potential disaster.

Proof of Backup

It's not enough to put a technology in place and assume it's always working in the background. With any sophisticated technology, there are potential points of failure. An intelligent business continuity service should offer automated assurance to ensure that systems are always bootable and provide screenshot verification.

Image-Based Backup

This feature serves as the backbone of a system and adds significant usability in disaster scenarios. With image-based backup users no longer have to pick and choose which files are backed up or worry about saving the most recent draft to the shared/backup folder. A picture of the workstation or server is taken and stored as a place in time for that machine. This is essential for restoration because rebuilding or virtualizing a machine requires not just files, but also the applications and systems.

Virtualization

Virtualization refers to the process around creating a virtual version of something. In the case of business continuity, this would likely be servers, devices, applications, or entire networks. The virtualized versions act completely independently from the physical devices. This feature keeps businesses functioning when the physical devices fail, minimizing downtime.

Secure Storage

Keeping your data secure, whether it be personal or business, is hugely important when selecting a backup solution. Natural disasters can wipe out entire facilities, so it is important to choose a provider with multiple, geographically separated data centers.

Bonus Features

As the majority of issues occur in the backup chain, it's important to look for a solution that addresses this. Our solution can help users look more closely at what's happening between backups. Inverse Chain Technology(™) creates an optimal backup chain from scratch, and restores and virtualizes every point. Additionally our Backup Insights feature gives users the ability to see what's happening in between backup points. Users can simply select two backup points and then move to see which file or application changes may have occurred between the two.

For more information please contact:
ACT Technology Services | https://www.act-guard.com
Email: info@actcpas.com
Phone: 888.403.9788