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Choosing a disaster recovery service provider for SMBs

It's no longer an option for any organization to be without a current, thoroughly tested [disaster recovery \(DR\) plan](#), regardless of their size. Your DR plan is essential to keep your data safe in the event of an emergency, whether it's a natural disaster like a hurricane or flood, or a more mundane event such as a power failure. Small- to medium-sized businesses (SMBs) often have less manpower and less technical expertise than larger enterprises, which often makes executing a DR strategy more difficult.

Some SMBs turn to outside help and outsource a part—or all—of their DR functions to a disaster recovery service provider. According to Forrester Research Inc.'s *State of Enterprise Disaster Recovery Preparedness, Q2 2011*, 43% of organizations are interested in using a disaster recovery service provider, but have no firm plans in place. Clearly there is interest in disaster recovery outsourcing, but many are still weighing the pros and cons.

To help you decide whether or not disaster recovery outsourcing is a good choice for your organization, we've collected our top tips and expert advice on disaster recovery service providers. Learn about the pros and cons of disaster recovery outsourcing, what it will cost and how to choose the best disaster recovery service provider in this collection of tips.

[GETTING STARTED WITH DISASTER RECOVERY OUTSOURCING](#)

If you are considering DR outsourcing, there's a lot you need to know. What will the DR site include and what will you get? In order to determine which disaster recovery outsourcing service is right for your company, consultant Harvey Betan recommends asking the following questions:

- What type of equipment is available for recovery?
- What support is provided at the facility?
- What is their policy about exercises?

For more information about getting started with disaster recovery services, read the full article on [disaster recovery outsourcing](#).

[DISASTER RECOVERY SERVICES FOR SMBs](#)

In this podcast from sister site SearchStorage UK, Simon Johnson, data recovery practice lead at GlassHouse Technologies, discusses the key DR planning options for SMBs, and whether it's best to provide disaster recovery in-house or via a disaster recovery service provider. Learn about common challenges SMBs face when outsourcing DR, questions to ask potential vendors, and more. Listen to this podcast for more information on [disaster recovery services](#).

[CLOUD DISASTER RECOVERY AND SMBs](#)

One of the biggest buzzwords in IT today is the cloud. Forrester's survey said the three primary reasons organizations are using cloud disaster recovery are the subscription-based pricing model; fast, easy

deployment; and the fact that it is easier and cheaper to test your disaster recovery plan when using the cloud. This is because "traditional disaster recovery service providers recognize this [the need for DR testing] but have to schedule rehearsals, reserve equipment, and often be on call for you during the rehearsal. All this prep costs money and is typically above and beyond the DR services contract. With cloud DR services, there's usually little to no prep required, which allows you to rehearse more easily and at much lower cost."

But cloud disaster recovery is still a new technology and many organizations are skittish about having their important data offsite. Learn about whether or not [cloud disaster recovery](#) is a good choice for SMBs in this expert response by StorageIO Group senior analyst Greg Schulz.

[SELECTING A MANAGED BUSINESS CONTINUITY SERVICE PROVIDER](#)

The managed services industry is already very large, and new companies are being added to the roster almost every day. Within the business continuity and disaster recovery arena, many managed services providers' offerings focus primarily on protecting data centers, systems, applications and data. They may offer business continuity/disaster recovery services outside the technical side, but that's generally not their real focus. One of the main aspects of a managed business continuity service provider is to offer a selection of disaster recovery services, generally for monthly fees. This article looks at another aspect of BC/DR managed services: the provision of DR/BC planning services, and offers tips to help you select the best provider, obtain the best deal, and get the best results. Read the whole article about selecting [managed business continuity provider](#).

[FREE SERVICE-LEVEL AGREEMENT TEMPLATE](#)

Getting the right service-level agreement is critical part of dealing with disaster recovery service providers. Service-level agreements are agreements that specify: 1) a service to be provided; 2) expected performance with regard to what's being delivered; 3) metrics against which performance will be judged; and 4) and remedies in case the agreed-upon deliverables aren't satisfactorily provided.

The company you work with may have their own, or you may need to draft one for use within your organization. To help you get started with creating your own service-level agreement, we've provided a free [service-level agreement template](#) for you to download.

For even more resources on disaster recovery service providers, bookmark our special section on [disaster recovery services and outsourcing](#).

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