



Free Report: How to Create a Data Recovery Plan by HardSoft Systems Ltd.

If you lost all of your business data today what would you do?



How to Create a Data Recovery Plan

Step # 1: Review your current situation:

Question? Have our *IT systems been audited* recently?

Why? Conducting an IT systems audit can save you time and money. During an IT systems audit, records of all computers, workstations, servers, LANs, router, etc. is created. The records will include processor type, memory usage and the software applications installed on each workstation/computer. All anti-virus and malware protection software will be recorded and checked to see it is up to date. Windows based machines will be checked to ensure that all required service packs have been installed.

The report will highlight if all applications and computers/workstations are being backed up by the server. In addition, the location of the required license keys for all installed applications as this is critical for the recovery plan.

Question? What is our current backup strategy? Are we using the cloud, off-site or both as our backup? If we are using an off-site or cloud backup, are the servers located in Canada? (**very important**). If we are doing a local backup only, are we backing up all computers, or just the server? **Have we actually tested the backup systems?** (this will be discussed further in step # 3).

At HSL we offer IT system audits, various Canadian cloud back-up solutions, data security and data recovery solutions for businesses of all sizes.

Step # 2: Determine the priorities.

Question? If we have to start up from scratch, what system(s) do we need to have running and in what order? Set the priorities thinking of the most important business process first, and then follow with other applications. For example: accounting first, then the production application, then shipping/receiving.

Depending on the reason for the data loss, the recovery time may be staggered due to hardware failures, or the time it takes to re-install the applications.

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Don't forget to include the hardware. In case of data recovery, hardware components may need to be replaced. Do we have replacement hardware on site or does our IT partner take care of stocking replacement? Is our IT partner able to quickly respond with replacement servers, critical workstations, and telephone systems?

Step # 3 Test the plan. VERY IMPORTANT!

Question? When was the last time the plan was tested and actual back up data was reviewed for accuracy? Many companies, even if they have a plan, have never tested it. A large proportion of businesses we audit have an UPS (uninterruptable power supply) to provide emergency power to their server or main computer(s). However, the UPS has never been tested to see that it works including if the important alert signals are being sent to the computer or server.

Why? Testing all backup systems on a regular basis is a good business practice. When crunch time comes you want the confidence that your data backup is complete. Testing the backup can simply mean requesting random files from your off-site backup provider to make sure they are up to date. **Important** - most backup vendors simply do backups. The responsibility of restoring the data is yours.

Step # 3 1/2: Is our employee contact phone number list up to date so everyone can be reached in an emergency?

STEP # 4 (Bonus) Review the plan when you create a new budget. As the business model changes the backup plan must be revised accordingly.

Summary: The business world has changed, for the better! Those companies that have invested in technology have seen their investment return to them through increased revenues, lower costs and increased productivity. Along with these benefits comes **the possibility of data loss through theft, hardware failure, or an employees' innocent mistake**. Take the time to create a simple data recovery plan that will protect your business investment and keep your business running.

Contact HSL today and we will create a plan with you or review your current plan and give advice based on our experience.