What's the Right Disaster Recovery Solution for You?

3PL and Trucking Companies Should Choose Carefully

By Chuck Cook, RenovoData

It is universally understood that any company's success relies largely on effective data management, which can only be achieved with a multi-part, technically advanced and well-managed IT system. For businesses of any size, these systems are composed of many elements, selected for maximum productivity and the ability to function interactively. Each component should be constantly monitored and regularly tested to ensure its performance.

The same care should be taken in devising and maintaining the system's disaster recovery processes, but that is not always the case. It is a mistake to think of disaster recovery as nothing much more than data backup, a limited function that can be put in place and forgotten, like the spare tire in a car's trunk. Many companies fail to realize that disaster-related downtime may result in catastrophic damage, not only because of lost time and productivity, but also through the permanent loss of critical data and damage to the organization's reputation.

An equally risky misconception is the idea that disaster recovery solutions are alike. The truth is they are as varied as IT systems themselves. They should be selected carefully and implemented with the organization's specific needs in mind.

Behind an effective disaster recovery plan is the principle of total business protection, a combination of backup and server recovery solutions that can recover and restore data rapidly, securely and reliably.

A solid disaster recovery plan includes these essential concepts:

- Data is a precious asset, so always copy and securely store everything that you want to keep, emphasis on securely and everything.

- Choose and put in place solutions and processes for recovering operating systems and applications. Otherwise, you have no clear path to restoration of normal activities, which could severely damage or even destroy your business.

- Acquire and install solutions for restoring post-disaster communications company-wide. Although all lines of communication may not be completely reinstated, it is imperative that key connections be brought back as quickly as possible.

- Put the plan into a carefully crafted document. Emphasize the most important data and applications and thoroughly explain how they can be restored to service. Be sure to assign document creation to someone who is a good writer, understands the material, and has time to do the work.

- Be prepared to modify the written plan regularly to include updates, procedural changes, and shifts in policy. Overlooking normal system changes as they occur can render the plan ineffective.

- Ensure that your entire team fully understands the nature and importance of the disaster recovery plan. See to it that each member is prepared to assume his or her role quickly and effectively. Be sure to establish a leadership hierarchy.

These guidelines apply to companies of any size and category. Effective implementation is never easy, and 3PL and trucking companies face some particularly complex challenges.

- Customer confidence is of paramount importance, so it requires the fastest possible recovery of customer-facing processes. Not only do perceptions count, the ability to make customers look good to their customers counts just as much, and that relies on top-flight IT performance.

- No industry depends more on flawless interaction between business components – warehouse management, yard management, transportation management, and more. Nonstop IT support makes it happen.

- The array of small devices needed to keep 3PL and trucking businesses humming are potential weak points in the overall system. Everything from asset tracking to wireless web access to document management must be fully protected.

Since 3PL and trucking companies are data-dependent, an effective disaster recovery plan is especially vital.

For more information on overall data and systems protection for 3PL and trucking companies, please reference RenovoData's website at www.renovodata.com or call 1.877.834.3684