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Top 9 Worst Excuses For Not Performing Daily Offsite Computer Backup

Sean Sweeney

1. **My IT Support person takes care of that ... I think.**

Tell me, what confirmation do you have that your critical and proprietary information is being safely stored offsite every day? "Well," you say, "maybe not every day, but I know my computer is being backed up, somehow, on a semi-regular basis. That's part of what my IT guy does."

My advice: Act quickly to take control of your information, because your livelihood depends on its survival. The key is to employ a service that monitors your backup every day, and sends you daily email confirmation that your backup has completed successfully.

You can include your IT person in the process, because he/she should have a recommendation for a reputable offsite data backup service. They may prefer that you use a hardware solution, like an external hard drive, to manually (repeat: manually) backup your computers, but that's because they believe they have a higher margin on hardware sales. The best IT Support people already have relationships in place with trusted online backup services, so they feel good about helping you protect your business using the best solution. Don't rest until you can confidently say: "Yes, my computers are backed up to secure offsite servers all 365 days a year."

2. **I don't have time to perform my backup daily. Once a month is good enough.**

Picture this: You always perform your monthly backup on the last day of the month. It's just too bad that your computer crashed unexpectedly on the 29th. That's 29 days of progress down the tubes. And guess what? Computer crashes are always unexpected.

3. **My assistant does perform my backup daily, except for the days that she works from home, is on vacation, or is off sick.**

You know what they say about Murphy ... he's a real devil. When the crash happens, it'll most likely happen on the 10th day of your assistant's two-week vacation. That's just the way Murphy rolls.

4. **I already do data backup. (Yes, this is an excuse for NOT doing daily backup.)**

I've heard this one more times than I'd like to admit. But in 99% of cases, it's an outright lie, and the easiest way for business owners to dismiss me and avoid thinking about computer backup altogether. This excuse comes from the minds that have fallen deeply into the trap of relying on technology to just keep on working as it should. My friend calls this the "Toaster Myth". You know, like your sophisticated computer is going to just keep on truckin' like your 15 year old toaster still does. These are the business owners that I worry about most.

5. All I really need backed up is my bookkeeping, and my accountant stores those files for me once a year.

Again, having to recreate 6 or 8 or 11 months worth of bookkeeping records would be a nightmare. Consider this: on average, it takes 21 days and \$19,000 to re-key 20 megabytes of accounting data. Does that sound like something that your business could easily handle and survive? I sure wouldn't want to test that theory.

6. I'm an entrepreneur. I'm busy networking, knocking on doors and fighting for business. My company really isn't big enough to need daily computer backup.

If this is your excuse, you're certainly not alone. Statistics show that 40% of small businesses in Canada never back up their computers ... not even once (Globe and Mail, May 16, 2007). But the truth is that solo-preneurs work harder than the majority of business owners, and at over 70 hours per week, certainly more than your average employee. So how many of these 70+ hours are spent collecting names for your growing contact database? How would you feel if you lost that database, and what is it worth to you? I'd be willing to bet that your database is many times more valuable than the cost of daily online computer backup.

7. I work on a laptop, which I take home every night, so my computer is offsite.

This one's a bit of a laugh. I just can't help but smile when I hear this excuse because, in a way, they've got a point. But here's the scary fact: 2000 laptops are stolen every day in North America. They're stolen from cars, from the check-in line at the airport, from your office while you're in the restroom, or goodness forbid from your home. And laptops become the unfortunate targets for spilled coffee mugs, or hard knocks during transport. If anything, your laptop is more at risk for data loss than your desktop computer, and it's certainly not an offsite solution that you should count on.

8. My computer is brand new, so I'm not worried about backing it up just yet.

This would seem to be the most logical of all the excuses not to back up your computer on a daily basis. And that's why it has been one of the most difficult excuses for me to overcome. That is until February 2007, when Google Inc. released their widely talked-about whitepaper entitled Failure Trends in a Large Disk Drive Population. According to this study, which is the most extensive of it's kind ever completed, hard drives are most likely to fail if they are less than 3 months old, or more than 2 years old. In other words, if you think daily computer backup is unnecessary because your computer is brand new, you may be in for a terrible surprise. The bottom line is that it's impossible to predict how soon your computer may crash.

9. Daily offsite backup is too expensive, and it's not in my budget this year.

This excuse is the most common and the most dangerous. It is largely responsible for the fact that 70% of small businesses that suffer a major data loss go out of business within one year (Globe and Mail, May 16, 2007).

Why work so hard to build your business to its current level of success, only to watch all that work go up in smoke, be stolen out from under you, or be wiped out by a hard drive crash? Ask yourself: how many hours a day do I spend working on my computer? Then ask: how much is my time worth? Is your time worth \$50/hour, or \$100/hour, or \$200/hour? Because the multiplication of these two answers is just the beginning of the expenses that you will rack up if you have to recreate all of your information from scratch. Never mind the opportunity cost of wasted time, or the embarrassment of contacting your clients to let them know you've lost their personal information, or the amount of business that you'll lose as a result.

Most small businesses can avoid this disaster by committing to a daily computer backup strategy for under \$600/year. For example, as of January 2007, an average client paid \$49.95/month to have all of their

critical information automatically backed up to a secure offsite server all 365 days a year. If you need to beg, borrow or, well, borrow \$50.00 a month to protect the future of your business, then that's exactly what you should do.

So please, act today to protect your information, because no excuse is worth losing your business.

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