Npi TECHNOLOGY TIMES

Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably

JAY HILL

Two weeks ago, I attended a convention in Nashville. It was held at a famous hotel chain that has 65 locations. When I checked in, the front desk told me their computers, credit card machines, and keyless room entries were down. I asked if they had been hit by ransomware and she confirmed. Over the next week, guests had to go to their floor, meet an employee standing at the elevator who would let them in their room. We had to eat off premises unless we paid cash. It was hard for guests, but the hotel lost a lot of money. An Idaho hospital and multiple hospitals in Nebraska were also recently hit by a cyberattack and it took weeks to get back to business. We live in a tough world. Cybersecurity is more important than ever. NPI has a dedicated cybersecurity manager to ensure we are doing all we can to prevent attacks. Next week our manager is going for further training. He does this regularly to stay on the cutting edge. Please let us analyze your system so you are protected.

This monthly publication is provided courtesy of Jay Hill, CEO of Network Providers, Inc.

OUR MISSION:

To build a community of success-minded entrepreneurs that inspires excellence, encourages collaboration and expands the capacity of all members to achieve great things.

WHY 60% OF DATA BACKUPS FAIL BUSINESSES WHEN THEY NEED THEM MOST
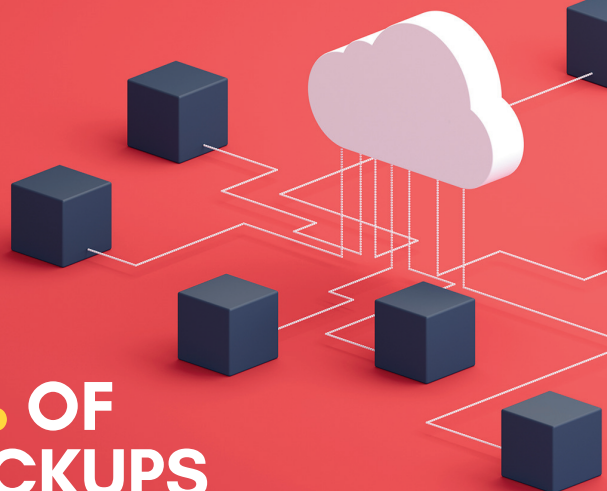
From natural disasters and cyber-attacks to accidental deletion, there are many reasons a business needs to back up its data. However, Avast's latest findings on disaster recovery highlight an alarming issue for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs): 60% of data backups are not fully successful, and half of the attempts to recover data from these backups don't work. This leads to businesses being offline for an average of 79 minutes, costing them roughly $84,650 for every hour of downtime.

Still, not all backups are created equal. It's important you're aware of backup best practices, so you're confident your backup solution will work when you need it most.

Why Backups Are Failing

There are a few common reasons backups are incomplete or a restoration fails:

- **Backup products are unreliable:** When it comes to backups, you get what you pay for. Free or cheap solutions may not offer the robust features of more expensive products. This can result in backups that are not as secure or reliable.

- **Backup times are not optimal.** If backups are scheduled during high-traffic periods or when data is being heavily modified, there's a risk that not all data will be captured.

- Compatibility issues. **As your business e**volves, so do your systems and software. However, new systems may not always be fully compatible with existing backup solutions. This can lead to situations where data is not properly saved or, even if it is, cannot be restored correctly because the formats or systems are no longer aligned.

- **Human error.** Mistakes such as incorrectly configuring backup parameters, accidentally deleting crucial files or ignoring backup schedules and alerts can lead to backup failures.

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Cyber-attacks and other disasters are a constant threat. If your backup fails and you get hacked, you might lose data permanently. Additionally, health care and finance organizations have strict compliance regulations around data handling, and failed backups can result in fines, legal challenges and a damaged reputation.

Best Practices For Successful Data Backup And Restoration

Reliable data backups and successful restoration are your lifeline in times of crisis. From choosing the right backup solution to regular testing and daily monitoring, these best practices protect your data from surprise disruptions, ensuring your business doesn't miss a beat, no matter what comes your way.

1. Pick a solid backup solution.

Don't just go for the big names in backup software; some might not deliver what they promise. Digging deep and finding a solution that suits your needs is essential. For example, immutable backups are a must-have for anyone needing to meet strict compliance rules, as they can't be changed or deleted, even by a ransomware attack. Talk with your IT provider about the backup technologies they're using for you, how quickly you can expect to recover data, what kind of downtime you might face and whether your backups are on the cloud, local or a mix of both. Make sure your backup ticks all the boxes for compliance, especially if you're in a sensitive field like health care.

2.Use the 3-2-1 rule.

Once you have a reliable backup solution, consider using the 3-2-1 backup rule, a standard set of best practices for data recovery. The rule recommends storing three copies of your data in two different formats, with one copy stored off-site. This significantly reduces your risk of total data loss.

3. Make sure a backup status report is being generated daily.

Ensure someone – either you or someone on your IT team – is checking the backup status every day. Incomplete backups should be followed up on immediately. Even if your IT team receives a daily report, ask to have a weekly or monthly report delivered to you too, so you can verify that your backups are successful.

4. Do regular restore tests.

Like a fire drill for your data, do a trial run and restore some files or even the whole server every few months to ensure everything works as it should. It's one thing to have backups, but another to ensure they are in good condition and the data can be retrieved as expected.

Don't Ignore Your Data Backups!

Backups might seem like one of those "set and forget" tasks, but when disaster strikes – be it a flood, fire or cyber-attack – your backup could be what saves your business. If you haven't already, start a conversation with your IT provider and make sure your backup strategy is solid and reliable.

CARTOON OF THE MONTH

"Oh, that. We beefed up security."

ASTRONAUT BUZZ ALDRIN'S
LESSONS TO ACHIEVE IMPOSSIBLE DREAMS

Amazon Basics 8-Sheet High Security Micro-Cut Shredder

July 20, 1969, just eight years after President Kennedy made one of history's most ambitious declarations – the US would send a man to the moon and back – Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin became the first people to set foot on the moon.

Today, Buzz is a philanthropist, author and renowned speaker who shares what being a space pioneer taught him about life on Earth: no mission is completed alone, failure is a crucial milestone of success and to never stop envisioning your next impossible dream .

Lessons From "The Moonman"

Dream The Impossible

Aldrin remembers President Kennedy's announcement in 1961, and although he wasn't sure how they'd do it, he said, "We did have a leader with that determination, the courage and the confidence that we can get there." Without a leader brave enough to share an impossible vision, ideas never get off the ground. In business, it's crucial to give your team a meaningful vision to rally around, something they want to be a part of.

Behind Every Successful Mission Is A TEAM

The "backroomers" – software engineers, secretaries and even the tailors who manufactured spacesuits – were all necessary to Apollo's safe launch and return to Earth. When Apollo 11 landed, the world cheered. "People were not just cheering for three guys but for what we represented," Buzz recalled in a speech. "That by the nation and the world coming together, we had accomplished the impossible, and the true value of it is the amazing story of innovation and teamwork that overcame many obstacles to reach the moon."

Success is rarely the story of one person. Rather, it's often the story of many people working together. "There are a lot of people out there in the universe who wish you well and want to be your friend. Let them help you," Buzz said. "You don't have to carry it all on your own."

Failure Is A Mark Of Growth

In the book *No Dream Is Too High*, Buzz explains how everyone at NASA knew the risks involved in their mission. Only by planning for failure and testing every system, component and spacesuit zipper could they improve design and functionality – failure was part of the process.

"Some people don't like to admit that they have failed or that they have not yet achieved their goals or lived up to their own expectations," Buzz wrote. "But failure is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign that you are alive and growing."

Know What's Next

What happens when you accomplish what you set out to do after all the cheers and high-fives? After Apollo, Buzz wrote in the book Magnificent Desolation, "There was no goal, no sense of calling, no project worth pouring myself into."

He sunk into severe depression for years, finally realizing, "I needed to realign my direction and find a new runway."

Today, he's a speaker, author and philanthropist for STEAM-based education to help get the next generation of heroes to the moon – and beyond. Perhaps the key to lifelong fulfillment is never to "land" for too long – to keep learning, growing and achieving impossible things.

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A slow or sluggish computer can be a sign you've been hacked?

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DEEP WORK

By Cal Newport

It's undeniable: we're more distracted than ever. From text messages and e-mail pings to social media and our own disruptive thoughts, the relentless influx of distractions is sabotaging our productivity and even our ability to be present in our lives. *Deep Work*, by Cal Newport, is a compelling guide to help us take back our focus and cultivate more fulfillment in our work. Newport introduces readers to four "rules" to transform our minds and habits into a hyper-focused superpower: work deeply, embrace boredom, quit social media and drain the shallows. Through engaging stories and practical advice, the book outlines a framework for cultivating a deep work ethic, promising professional growth and a more profound sense of personal fulfillment. *Deep Work* is an essential read for those looking to navigate a distracted world with grace and achieve focused success.
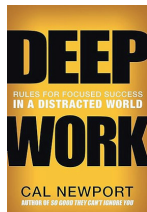
DEEPFAKES ARE COMING TO THE WORKPLACE

Deepfakes result from people using AI and machine-learning technology to make it seem like someone is saying something they never actually said. Like every other tech on the market, it can be used with good and bad intentions. For example, David Beckham appeared in a malaria awareness campaign, and AI enabled him to appear to speak nine different languages. On the other hand, pornographic deepfakes of Taylor Swift went viral on X (to the horror of Swifties worldwide), and audio deepfakes of Biden encouraging New Hampshire voters not to cast ballots caused concern among experts.

However, deepfakes aren't happening only to high-profile politicians and celebrities – they are quickly making their way into the workplace. In April 2023, forensics research company Regula reported that one-third of businesses worldwide had already been attacked by deepfake audio (37%) and video (29%) fraud. Regula also noted that the average cost of identity fraud, including deepfakes, costs global SMBs $200,000 on average.

How Deepfakes Are Impacting The Workplace

While deepfake technology is used to commit a variety of crimes, there are two ways deepfakes currently cause harm to businesses like yours:

1. Impersonation/Identity Fraud Schemes
2. Harm To Company Reputation

One of the most common deepfake attacks is when AI impersonates an executive's voice to steal credentials or request money transfers from employees. Other attacks include deepfake videos or audio of a CEO or employee used to disseminate false information online that could negatively affect a brand. More than 40% of businesses have already experienced a deepfake attack, according to authentication experts at ID R&D.