UNITRENDS

How To Spend Less Time On DR & More Time On IT

10 WAYS TO OPTIMIZE AND AUTOMATE BUSINESS CONTINUITY

INTRODUCTION

One of the first, and still most important jobs for IT is to protect corporate data. Then, as businesses became more automated, fast recovery of failed applications was added to the list of essential tasks, potentially making data protection and continuity a full time job. Fortunately technologies have emerged that both simplify and automate the daily drain backup and recovery can take on IT schedules. The less time spent on backup and recovery is more time to spend doing the things that really excite IT - working with business to increase productivity. Deploy these 10 tools included in today's best-of-breed backup and continuity devices and you get to decide what you do with the time you saved.

TIME SAVING METHOD #1: PROTECT EVERYTHING WITH A SINGLE SOLUTION

Effort to Implement: Hours

Time Saved: 2+ Days/Month

Your environment is complicated, but protecting it doesn't have to be. You need to protect everything your users need to do their job, whether the workloads are physical or virtual, deployed on premises, at a remote location, or in the cloud. In addition new technologies are emerging, such as hyperconverged infrastructure from Nutanix and Cisco that can further complicate data protection. Legacy backup tools generally protect only a limited set of technologies. Today's modern backup and recovery solutions protect everything regardless of deployment style or physical location. A single solution also leaves no coverage gaps. Needless to say, using three different protection tools means 3X the work.

TIME SAVING METHOD #2:
FAST RECOVERY OF LOST FILES

Effort to Implement: 0

Time Saved: Minutes/ Recovery

Users calling to request the restoration of lost files is one of the greatest interruptions of daily IT schedules. Organizations need to ensure their data protection technology supports easy file recovery; it should take less than five minutes to recover a lost file, from login to full restoration. The UI should be easy and intuitive enough that any member of IT can recover a lost file without having to consult a manual or receive special training. Quickly addressing these file recovery interruptions will free IT to focus on more pressing computing projects.

TIME SAVING METHOD #3: AUTOMATED TESTING

The only way you know you're not wasting time and money on expensive recovery plans is to test it regularly and see the results. IT pros are already overwhelmed with the day to day tasks of managing complex and extensive IT infrastructure, so carving out time to perform testing can be a reach. Running locally on the backup appliance or in the cloud, a new generation of tools will automatically test and certify full recovery with no manual involvement from IT staff. Using backup files, the entire infrastructure is recreated to ensure that all data and application dependencies are correct. Final reports showing failed recoveries, actual RPOs / RTOs, and any recovery issues are automatically sent to administrators via email. Since testing is fully automated none of your time is required to gain 100% confidence that you will recover from a downtime event.

Effort to Implement: Minutes

Time Saved: Days/DR Test

TIME SAVING METHOD #4:
AUTOMATED RANSOMWARE DETECTION

Effort to Implement: 0

Time Saved: Days per Attack

Recovering from a ransomware attack can chew up days to weeks of your time. Enterprise data protection appliances should have the ability to quickly and automatically identify ransomware activity as part of every backup. New ransomware variants operate in stealth mode, seeking critical files, and encrypting at a slower rate to stay under the detection radar and increase the odds that a ransom will be paid. Newly developed artificial intelligence runs during every backup, analyzes the randomness and rates of file changes to identify backups infected by ransomware. Upon detection email and dashboard alerts are sent immediately to administrators, and all suspected backups flagged with icons to prevent recoveries using infected files.

TIME SAVING METHOD #5:
SIMPLE UI

A single dashboard should be all that is required to manage all aspects backup and recovery. One user interface (UI) enables greater familiarity with the commands and fewer click to accomplish your goals. Different UIs indicate that multiple applications have been cobbled together in a crude attempt to make it look like one integrated solution. The UI should allow you to see in a single glance the complete health of your data protection and any risk exposure. In addition the UI should include the ability to automate tasks, a simple connection to both the User Community (i.e. live feeds from the community to find topics of interest or for you to post queries) as well as the ability to connect with User Support.

Effort to Implement: 0

Time Saved: Hours/task

TIME SAVING METHOD #6:
WHITE GLOVE DRaaS SERVICES

Effort to Implement: 0

Time Saved: Days

DRaaS has evolved greatly from its first iterations. World-class DRaaS providers now offer “White Glove” services that free enterprise IT from having to learn, manage and deploy recoveries. DRaaS White Glove providers will do complete DR planning, including setting up the server boot order so business-critical applications are the first to recover. Recovery is initiated by a simple phone call to the service provider and they do all the work. DRaaS providers should also offer both 1-hour and 24-hour Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for application recovery. This high-touch version of DRaaS can be managed and deployed from any location and protect remote sites around the world. Once deployed corporate IT literally only has to monitor the automated reporting results.

TIME SAVING METHOD #7:
SLA POLICY AUTOMATION

IT Administrators are required to align data management and availability tactics to business policies, many times without really understanding how details such as file locations and backup schedules impact availability and recovery. SLA Policy Automation (SPA) greatly simplifies the way users define and manage backups. Backup appliances should be able to define backups in one easy step based on desired policy objectives rather than requiring administrators to select from multiple process settings. SPA allows administrators to define and schedule backups based on a specific recovery policy (RPO and location of backups), with the device then automatically defining and managing the steps required to deliver that policy. SPA greatly reduces the effort and confusion required to define backup schedules and dramatically increases the ability to meet data protection and business continuity mandates.

Effort to Implement: Minutes

Time Saved: Hours/Process

TIME SAVING METHOD #8:
INSTANT RECOVERY

Effort to Implement: Minutes

Time Saved: Hours/Recovery

In the event of a server failure or other localized outage, instant recovery can keep your business running smoothly. Instant recovery options such as VM replicas let you recover a failed or corrupted virtual machine or physical Windows server within seconds. This means production applications are quickly accessible and users can continue working shortly after a downtime event. Other recovery technologies will be slower to bring failed applications back online.

TIME SAVING METHOD #9:
PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS & SELF-HEALING HARDWARE

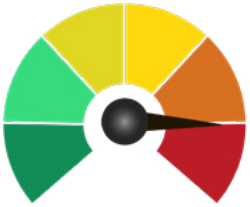
Effort to Implement: 0

Predictive analytics enables devices to understand what is inside the range of normal performance and predict hardware breakdowns. As intelligent devices gain greater knowledge from analyzing larger volumes of data, they will more accurately predict failures so recovery tactics can be taken before users are affected.   Self-healing disks in appliances identify, diagnose, and eliminate a variety of common sources of disk failure. Predictive analytics automatically monitors and analyzes performance trends to predict and prevent hardware failures. If an anomaly can't be prevented, look for a solution that will proactively notifies the customer and quick ship a replacement before failures affect backups.

Time Saved: Days

TIME SAVING METHOD #10: DR PLANNING

Effort to Implement: Days



Time Saved: Days / Downtime Event

A well-documented DR plan is critical to rapid business recovery. Including it on a list of time saving tools may seem counter intuitive since creating a DR plan takes more time than not doing one. However this recommendation is more about saving time when it matters most – speeding recovery from a downtime event. Organizations can use a free tool such as BCDR Link (https://bcdrlink.com) to build and customize a DR plan. This planning template follows the most up-to-date guidelines of ISO 22301 that specifies security requirements for DR preparedness and business continuity management systems (BCMS) and includes all steps necessary for a comprehensive recovery plan. During a downtime event, this tool ensures that everyone knows the steps required of them to accomplish the fastest recovery possible.

Time Saving Method	Time to Implement using Unitrends	Time Saved using Unitrends
Protect everything with a single solution	Hours	Dozens of hours to multiple days per month
Fast Recovery of lost files	0 Minutes	Minutes to hours per month
Automated Testing	15 - 30 Minutes	Days per DR test
Automated Ransomware detection	0 Minutes	Days to weeks per attack
Simple UI	0 Minutes	Minutes to hours per task
White Glove DRaaS Services	0 Minutes	Hours to days per recovery
SLA Policy Automation	2 Minutes	Minutes to hours per month
Instant Recovery	2 Minutes	Hours per recovery
Predictive analytics & Self-healing Hardware	0 Minutes	Hours to days per month
DR Planning	Hours to days	Hours to days per downtime event

CONCLUSION

IT Administrators are responsible for the technology that keeps the world’s businesses running. Every day they are faced with circumstances threatening to bring down your applications, servers, and even communication. Fortunately, today they have choices in the tools they can use to manage data backup and business recovery. Following these 10 recommendations will go a long way to reducing the organization’s DR workload. What you do with your recovered time is up to you but having a life outside of work is a good place to begin.

GET A FREE QUOTE

Unitrends increases uptime and confidence in a world in which IT professionals must do more with less. Unitrends leverages high-availability hardware and software engineering, cloud economics, enterprise power with consumer-grade design, and customer-obsessed support to natively provide all-in-one enterprise backup and continuity. The result is a “one throat to choke” set of offerings that allow customers to focus on their business rather than backup. Learn more by visiting unitrends.com or follow us on LinkedIn and Twitter @Unitrends.

UNITRENDS