The Plan B Disaster Recovery Report 2014

Executive Summary

Despite an increase in the shift from offsite backup to virtual standby methods, cost is still the highest priority when choosing a disaster recovery strategy.

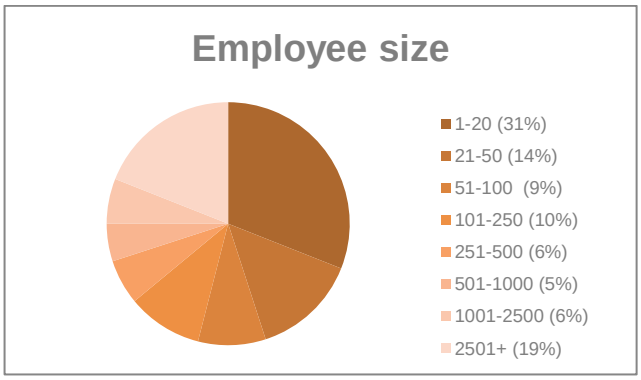
This demonstrates an increase in understanding behind the need for network resiliency, but limitations in budget mean companies still have to weigh up the cost against the benefits when deciding on their disaster recovery strategy.

The fact that over 50% of companies never test their disaster recovery solution highlights that once a solution has been implemented, there is a feeling of reassurance. Without testing it however, the majority of companies could be running the risk of wasting their investment on a solution that doesn't work in the event of a disaster. With cost being such a high priority, this could be a false investment.

This research was carried out by surveying 100 companies at an industry show Cloud Expo Europe on 26 and 27 February 2014.

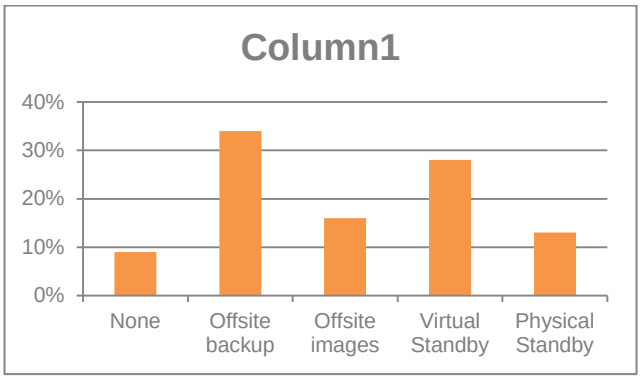
Research Demographics

All contacts interviewed were within an IT function of their business. The breakdown of size of businesses is as follows:



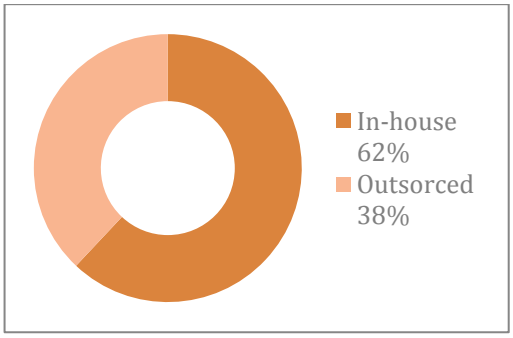
Copyright 2014 Plan B Disaster Recovery Ltd

1. The Majority of companies use either offsite backups or virtual standby for their disaster recovery



Trends show that whilst the majority of companies interviewed are still using offsite backup as their chosen disaster recovery method, virtual standby solutions are starting to compete. This may be because companies feel protecting their business against loss of data and downtime has become more of a priority, or because the cost of virtual standby solutions is starting to come down while performance improves. In effect there are better, more affordable solutions on the market today which could be why we're seeing the shift towards the virtual standby option.

2. Is a backup really a Disaster Recovery solution?



The majority of companies have an in-house solution for their disaster recovery. This would fit well with the strong driver to keep costs low. There is a misconception however that the offsite backup solution is a method of disaster recovery. Given that disaster recovery is the process for recovery or continuation of business critical technology in the event of a critical IT disaster, backup solutions are just a small part of a disaster recovery solution and need to go hand in hand with a broader recovery strategy. Companies are now very good at copying their data, but don't think enough about how they are going to get their IT systems back up and running in the event of a disaster. Having copies of your data is all very well, but when there is no recovery plan for how you will create the infrastructure it can often take days to your whole system recovered and tested, ready for your staff to be productive again.

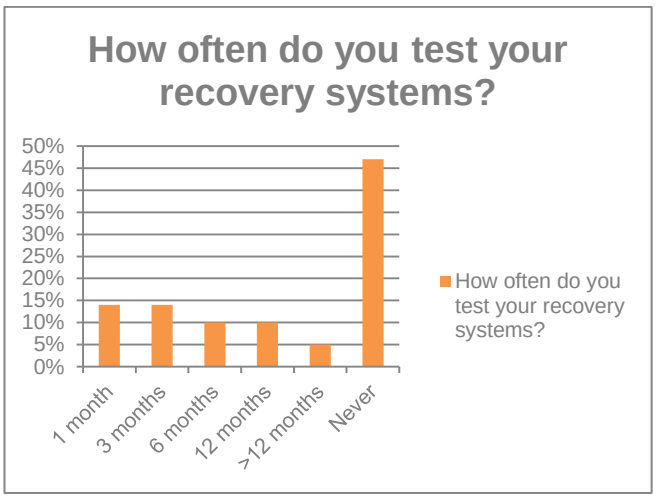
At the other end of the scale, there are companies working to zero RTO's and RPO's that have synchronous physical standby solutions. These companies prioritise disaster recovery and are acutely aware of the financial

Copyright 2014 Plan B Disaster Recovery Ltd

implications of their IT systems being down. The risk just isn't worth it for them - not just financially, but also reputationally.

3. Almost 50% of people are still using untested recovery systems.

Perhaps the most surprising statistics is that over 50% of people never test their disaster recovery solution. 28% of people test at least every 3 months, showing a disparity between those who feel strongly about testing and those who don't feel it is important.



Given that there is a high rate of failure of backup tapes, those who are using this lower performance method of disaster recovery and not testing it run a very high risk that they won't be able to recover as much data as quickly as they would expect in the event of a disaster.

4. Recovery time objectives can be improved

When asked about RTO's (recovery time objectives), most companies stated between 4 and 24 hours. The large majority of companies expect to be recovered within 24 hours, but with advancement in technology it's surprising that RTO objectives aren't shortening accordingly. Maybe this is because people set their expectations to match their experiences rather than the capabilities.

Recovery Time Objective	Percentage
<1 hour	19%
1-2 hours	16%
2-4 hours	12%
4-24 hours	29%
>24 hours	12%
Unsure	12%

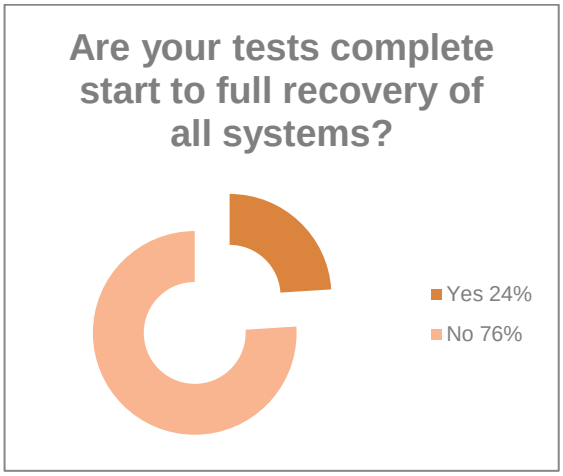
A surprising 52% of companies weren't sure of their RTO (recovery point objective). This statistic tallies with the RPO being a lower priority when choosing a Disaster Recovery strategy. The reliability and confidence in knowing that an IT system will be recovered and users productive again is much more important than the potential loss of data once it's recovered. Perhaps we are seeing that productivity is key for businesses and most are happy to risk some data loss as long as sales and marketing, operational and financial departments can continue to function.

Copyright 2014 Plan B Disaster Recovery Ltd

Recovery Point Objective	Percentage
<1 hour	19%
1-2 hours	0%
2-4 hours	19%
4-24 hours	10%
>24 hours	0%
Unsure	52%

5. Only 24% of companies test properly

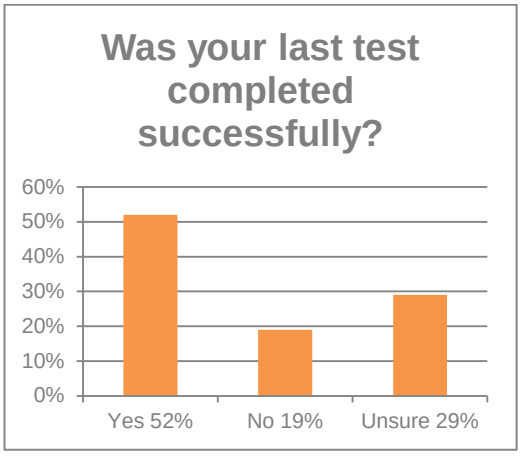
Whilst we've seen that 53% of companies can feel confident that they're testing their disaster recovery solution, only 24% of companies perform full end to end recoveries. This means less than a quarter of companies have fully practiced their disaster recovery plan. Anyone having experienced a live disaster recovery will know that it can be quite a chaotic experience, not exactly the best scenario to allow for a clear head which is necessary when working through a critical system recovery. There is a high level of stress associated with rebuilding new platforms, configuring software, ironing out errors, maintaining security policies and then restoring the data onto the new platform. When the business is chasing results and the employees are keen to resume productivity this isn't the time to be learning how to perform the perfect recovery.



6. Nearly 1 in 5 disaster recovery tests are unsuccessful

There are numerous statistics being quoted on the internet about the success rate of recoveries - none of which are traceable back to any reliable source. We can now reveal that 19% of tests that were performed are confirmed to have been unsuccessful. A further 29% of companies either can't remember, or were unsure what the result of their last recovery was. That leaves just over half of companies that can be confident their last test was successful. Companies should be 100% aware of the reliability of their disaster recovery solution. More regular testing would achieve this and give IT departments a more accurate judgement on the reliability of their disaster recovery solution.

Copyright 2014 Plan B Disaster Recovery Ltd



7. Businesses have confidence in the DR solution they have chosen

Despite only 24% of companies performing full end to end testing of their disaster recovery solution, 71% of companies are either very or fairly confident that their disaster recovery solution meets their business needs. This shows there is a level of optimism, although little proof, in the solution companies have chosen for their business.

Confidence that your DR solution will definitely work within RTO	Percentage
Not Very	29%
Fairly	23%
Very	48%

8. Only 14% of companies review their DR strategy regularly

A disaster recovery strategy should be reviewed with every IT change. This is usually once every 3 months for a medium sized business. Allowing for smaller companies who may undergo less frequent IT changes, still only 23% of companies review their disaster recovery strategy at least every 6 months. There is a need for companies to review their strategy more frequently, which requires prioritising the time to allow them to do this. Only with continuing education will disaster recovery really gain the attention it needs to ensure that the business risk of IT downtime is reduced.

9. Cost is King - or is it?

Depending on how you classify the answers, cost, reliability and performance are the key priorities when choosing a disaster recovery strategy. Performance relates to a system being recoverable within set recovery time and point

Copyright 2014 Plan B Disaster Recovery Ltd

objectives so a company can be productive again. Reliability relates to the frequency of the solution working. If you combine these two categories, into “reliable performance” then this comes out on top as the key priority. What is clear is that a guaranteed Disaster Recovery solution at the right cost ticks the boxes for 81% of companies and is therefore what Disaster Recovery companies should be striving to achieve.

Key Priorities when choosing a DR Solution	Percentage
That it will work	28%
Reliability	16%
RTO	11%
RPO/minimal data loss	8%
Cost	37%

Companies are least concerned about losing small amounts of data which is possibly because their experience of Disaster Recovery has proven that some data loss is inevitable with IT disasters. A sense of realism prevails even though disaster recovery solutions have progressed to the point where data loss is negligible if the right solution is implemented.

Conclusions

There is still work to be done educating companies about disaster recovery. This education needn’t stagnate on why it’s important to have a disaster recovery solution though. Companies are aware of this and take their risks accordingly. It should, instead, focus on the advancements in technology which will allow companies to have “reliable performance” at a “low cost” – the two key drivers that are controlling decisions. It seems conclusive that most companies who manage their Disaster Recovery in-house aren’t confident enough of the reliability of their solutions, aren’t fully aware of the success rate of tests, and aren’t testing their solutions as often as is recommended. The shift towards virtual standby solutions hints that the market is maturing though and over time we can expect to see adoption of this more reliable method increase as costs continue to make it more affordable.

About Plan B

Plan B is a specialist Disaster Recovery company that introduced Pre-recovery to the market. Our technology copies your data and pre-recovers your system every night, ensuring if you have a disaster then your system is already recovered – significantly reducing recovery time and guaranteeing it will work.

Our unique automation allows us to offer this high level of performance at a previously unobtainable cost.

For more information visit www.planb.co.uk
Or call 08448 707999
info@planb.co.uk

Copyright 2014 Plan B Disaster Recovery Ltd