

Generate Recurring Revenue With Remote Data Backup

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This solution provider developed a secure data backup monitoring and management service to earn recurring monthly revenue.

Global Data Vaulting Inc. (GDV) has developed a loyal customer base by offering data protection and business continuity services as a monthly subscription service. The company originally offered business continuity consulting services. "We developed our subscription services because we found that, while many SMBs had a recovery plan, the actual backup processes required tremendous improvement," states Jeffrey Beallor, president of GDV.

One of the ways GDV markets its services is by partnering with other professional services firms in the area. One of the firms GDV partners with is an accounting firm. Last year, the accounting firm recommended GDV to one of its clients, House of Horvath, a cigar manufacturer and distributor. After conducting some reviews and audits, the accounting firm was concerned about how House of Horvath was protecting and backing up its accounting data.

House of Horvath only had one IT employee. On a daily basis, he would back up data from the company's older Windows NT4 servers to tape and then take the tapes home to store in his closet. "While the IT employee was doing a great job with backup and recovery, there were still a lot of ways the process could be improved," says Beallor. Although off-site storage can be a good thing, House of Horvath didn't have any control over its backup tapes.

Business Continuity Survey Uncovers Data Risks

GDV began the project by performing a seven-day business continuity survey that evaluated the end user's disaster recovery plans, backup and recovery processes, and other policies and procedures. "We identified several areas that needed to be improved," explains Beallor. "We presented our recommendations along with House of Horvath's current costs for these processes."

At the time, House of Horvath's IT employee was spending about 20% of his time on backup and recovery. The company was planning to upgrade its unsupported NT4 servers to Microsoft 2003 servers, which would require a significant deployment. This project would also involve significant hardware and software upgrades, configuration changes, and purchases. "We recommended and demonstrated our Secure Managed Backup service and focused on the improved efficiency and reduced cost we offered," details Beallor. "It was significantly less expensive for House of Horvath to let us manage and maintain its backups."

GDV developed its Secure Managed Backup service to offer enterprise-class secure backups at a price the SMB market could afford. Beallor knew, to be successful, the service would have to cover a wide range of platforms and technologies and be able to scale quickly. GDV chose to build the engine for its Secure Managed Backup service from IBM's TotalStorage technology. GDV licenses the IBM Tivoli Storage Manager 5.2 software to its customers to deliver the integrator's managed service. The Tivoli software securely backs up customer data to disk and then migrates the data offline onto tape.

At House of Horvath, a team from GDV installed the new backup service in less than three hours. The team did an initial backup of the customer's data before configuring the VPN (virtual private network) between GDV's data center and House of Horvath's firewall. "Once we had established a secure tunnel through the firewall, we were able to secure House of Horvath's data in our data center," states Beallor. "Now, their backups run automatically on a predetermined schedule."

Since switching to GDV's Secure Managed Backup service, House of Horvath has reduced its storage management costs by almost 50%. The cigar manufacturer pays a monthly fee to GDV based on the amount of data being backed up and managed. Currently, GDV is backing up and managing more than 50 GB of compressed data for the customer, and the amount of data is growing exponentially. "We are now working with House of Horvath's IT employee on other business continuity projects," concludes Beallor.