The Great Blackout of 2003 - One year later
Would you pay a $1 a day for a good night sleep knowing you're protected?

TORONTO, Aug. 18 /CNW/ - The great blackout of summer 2003 exposed business continuity vulnerabilities in Information Technology systems and the facilities that support them. It also refocused attention on the need for businesses, especially those who are dependent on computer systems, critical applications and the data created by them to be better prepared and able to quickly respond to disruptive events.

Yet one year later are businesses any better prepared? Are managers properly informed as to their company's ability to recover from a business interruption.

The answer is "No" many small and medium sized businesses are not properly prepared says data management specialist Jeffrey Beallor, president of Toronto based Global Data Vaulting (GDV). "It is astounding owners / managers just don't seem to get it and those who do understand in many cases are slow to respond"

One company that clearly understood the need to be prepared is GeoHoliday Services a Toronto based marketing company. Realizing that any interruption to their computer systems would result in lost worker productivity, financial losses and potential harmful results to their business reputation Chris Ashton, IT Manager, took immediate action to ensure that when disaster struck they were fully prepared.

He contacted representatives from Global Data Vaulting and together they began the process of identifying and prioritizing the critical systems necessary to keep the business running. Once complete, Global Data Vaulting set up its Secure Managed Backup Service and within hours all critical systems were backed up, the data secured off-site and scheduled nightly backups defined.

The key to this service and what made it so attractive was simplicity. "Once key issues were identified and recovery planning for the system completed Global Data Vaulting managed the entire set-up process." says Mr. Ashton.

Ashton goes on to say "We will benefit from this valuable service by reducing hardware and software Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) as well as reduced operational costs of managing and maintaining backup hardware, software and the media the data resides on. Additionally my staff will no longer be required to read and respond to backup logs and all data is secured properly off site and available 24/7."

"Disaster struck. It was late Saturday evening and a computer virus corrupted our system." Mehul Patel, GeoHoliday's IT specialist recalls. "Our systems were down. We quickly identified the issue and then followed the restore procedures. GDV was contacted on their 24 hour hotline and within minutes all data pertinent to the recovery was back on our system. The systems were tested and functioning as designed within 35 minutes".

Don't be like the majority of small/medium-sized businesses that have no integrated, tested and managed data protection strategy. In other words says Mr. Beallor your data assets may be lost at any moment - and that can be a real disaster if you have no idea how to recover them.

GDV offers the following tips to help mitigate the risks associated with business continuity issues.

1. Insist on executive commitment to business continuity and disaster recovery.
2. Identify business critical processes and supporting IT systems within your operation.
3. Perform a business impact analysis of mission-critical systems.
4. Classify restore 'priority levels' for mission-critical and non-critical business systems.
5. Examine application co dependencies.
6. Test critical restore procedures in a real-time environment.
7. Ensure staff can perform IT recovery without key personnel.
8. Demand "restore performance tests" from those in charge of backing up the corporate data.

Who we are

Global Data Vaulting Inc. provides businesses with valuable high quality services, products and resources to assist with risk management and business continuity issues. Our services include business continuity evaluations, backup and recovery strategies, project management assistance and other information technology services and products. The key components that we offer are Business Continuity Assessment and High Security Off-Site Backup and Recovery Services. In addition, we provide ancillary products and services to assist companies in securing and maintaining their information technology processes in accordance with industry "best practices".

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