USING ONLINE BACKUP AS A GATEWAY TO CLOUD SERVICES

See how offering cloud and hybrid backup solutions drives business and leads customers to adopt other cloud services.

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If you're an IT provider, you know your business is changing fast as cloud services are replacing hardware and software.

The reasons are clear: the cloud offers better, cheaper, and more stable services than the traditional IT infrastructure. And, the cloud is growing. According to technology research firm Gartner, cloud computing will become the bulk of new IT spend by 2016.[1] By the end of 2017, Gartner predicts that nearly half of large enterprises will have hybrid cloud deployments.[1]

As a result, more and more IT providers are looking for ways to offer cloud and hybrid services to their customers. They recognize both the potential for new business and the risk of becoming obsolete if they can't adapt to leading-edge technologies. Plus, they recognize how the easy deployment of cloud services saves them time compared to the long and intensive efforts involved in a hardware/software installation. However, savvy IT providers are also wary of adapting to this shift in technology — they don't want to hand off their customers and lose control. Instead, they are looking for the right entry into cloud services, one that helps them maintain their existing relationships, builds upon their reputations, and brings in new customers.

If you are facing these realities, then backup and recovery solutions are a particularly good entry to cloud services. They are easy to sell, deploy, and manage. Plus, they provide many of the same functionalities that customers require in a faster, simpler, more affordable way. They keep you connected to your customers and provide them with a vital, potentially business-saving service.

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Incorporating online backup into your business model

Perhaps the most significant reason why online backup is a good gateway to cloud services is that it addresses a major pain point for businesses. In a recent Carbonite survey, small businesses ranked the permanent loss of data as the top threat to maintaining a business in the event of a natural disaster.[2] They reported that losing their data would be even more devastating than losing their physical location or inventory.[2]

By giving existing and new customers a positive first experience with online backup, you will be in a position to offer them more cloud services and expand your business. Even though many customers may worry about their data's safety — and be aware of cloud services — most have probably not put the two together. Here are some ideas for broaching the topic with customers:
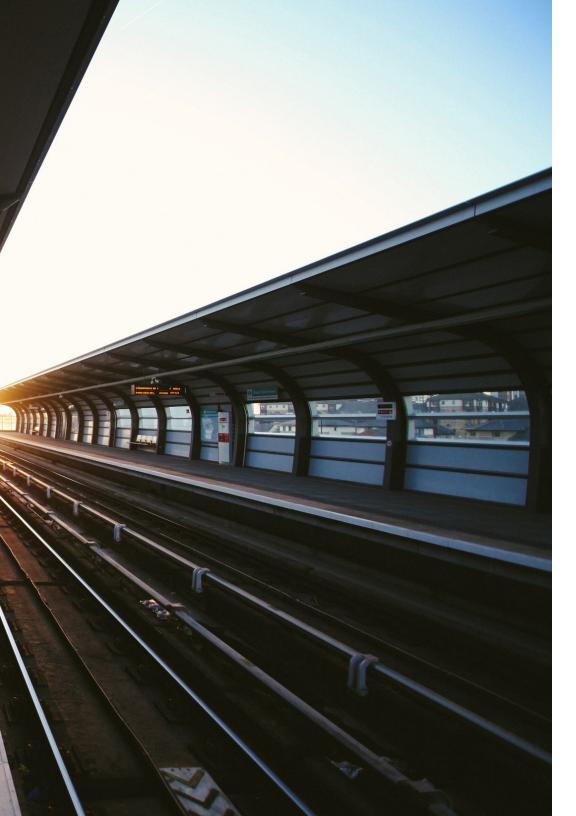
Start with your existing customers. Ask them if they would be interested in an inexpensive solution that would back up all their data automatically and make it easy to recover their files if needed. Even if you have already established a legacy backup system for them, the right cloud backup plan will offer a comprehensive solution that can back up their databases, as well as other assets, safely offsite.

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Then reach out to new customers. Start directly with their pain point. How are they backing up their data now? Have they ever lost information? If they lost all their data tomorrow, how much would it hurt their business? Would they be interested in an inexpensive solution that automatically backs up their data to a secure offsite location?

Bundle online backup. Once existing and new customers recognize the value of online backup, think of other services you can bundle around it, such as: CRM, email providers, and antivirus software. Not only will this help you increase the services you're offering customers and build your revenue, but you will also be providing them with far more robust solutions than in the past. And there is no better way for you to grow your business and reputation than by helping your customers succeed in theirs.

6 benefits of selling cloud backup

Strengthen your existing customer relationships

Grow your reputation as a cloud and hybrid services provider

Simplify your backup deployment

Save time for yourself and your customers

Drive revenue with new business

Enable customers to recover data from anywhere, keeping business moving

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What to look for in an online backup solution

When you are looking into solutions for your customers, be sure they offer the following features:

Automatic backups
It is just too easy for customers to get busy and forget to save their files. Therefore, look for a company whose automatic backup runs in the background, protecting new and changed files when the computer is connected to the Internet.

Hybrid capability
Leading backup and recovery solutions are built to work as hybrid solutions as well, allowing customers to protect their data in the cloud and locally. Be sure to choose a solution that features hybrid capability to give your customers the best of both worlds.

Easy file recovery
When a business loses their important files, the last thing they want is a complicated restoration process. Make sure your chosen solution is simple and restores your customers' files quickly, so they can keep business moving.

Complete solution
Look for a company that can offer a comprehensive backup solution to cover all of your customers' assets, including their databases, external hard drives, Network-Attached Storage (NAS) devices, even servers, and more.

Access
With the right service, you can give your customers access to their data from anywhere. That means they can synchronize data between their offices and devices.

Security and compliance
Advanced encryption technology and automation should protect data at all times—with files sent to the cloud in the background while project work goes on. Look for a company that transmits customer data using SSL technology and stored at secure, off-site data centers. In addition, ensure their solutions support HIPAA, FERPA, and GLBA compliance for superior data privacy.

Versioning
Keeping multiple versions of a file is the best way to help your customers resolve any accidental changes or deletions. We recommend working with solutions that keep versions of files for at least 30 days.

Scalability
As businesses grow, their data solutions should be able to easily scale with them. Make sure that your chosen solution can be enhanced and upgraded as business requires.

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Carbonite: The ideal choice for cloud and hybrid services

When it comes to cloud and hybrid data backup, Carbonite has a suite of business-grade solutions that are easy to manage, easy to access, and affordable for customers. Plus, they're hybrid-capable, HIPAA, FERPA, and GLBA compliant, and secure.

To start providing Carbonite solutions to your customers, join the Carbonite Partner Program today.

LEARN MORE

Or visit **http://bit.ly/1CayUMy**.

1. Gartner. *Gartner Says Cloud Computing Will Become the Bulk of New IT Spend by 2016.* October 24, 2013.

2. Small business data loss results: Carbonite Small Business Data Backup Usage Study, 2011.

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