

# COVERING THE BASES TO ENSURE BUSINESS CONTINUITY

## ➔ A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO DATA BACKUP

For almost every business, large or small, a strategy for backing up and restoring critical data is essential for business continuity. In addition, as a result of new audit requirements and regulatory oversight, data backup is increasingly becoming an issue of compliance.

As part of a complete suite of hardware infrastructure services, Q9 assists its customers with continuity and compliance issues by providing an array of backup solutions. These solutions range from cost-effective, high-performance centralized disk, to fully dedicated disk, tape and hybrid solutions.

Each solution starts with the customer's data. Once the data being backed up is identified, a key consideration is where to store it.

"In each of the regions we operate, we have several data centres and have invested in building out connectivity between them," says Stewart Beak, Director of Product Management for Q9.

Beak goes on to explain that data can be backed up to a geographically diverse facility over Q9's inter-data centre network. In the case of centralized backup solutions (i.e. that leverage Q9's backup cloud), this happens automatically and at no additional cost to the customer. Unlike traditional off-site storage services, the data remains online and available for rapid restoring.

"Centralized backup with offsite storage gives custom-

ers the added security of having their data in a separate geographic location," explains Beak. "This allows them to maintain compliance and resilience from a business continuity perspective."

Another benefit of Q9's backup offering is that, regardless of whether the solution is based on shared or dedicated infrastructure, Q9 can deliver client-side encryption of customer data.

"This allows the backup solution to more easily comply with audit requirements," says Beak.

For customers who have long-term archiving requirements (which, in some cases, can be for years), Q9 coordinates with offsite media archiving providers to transfer tape-based media to an offline facility of the customer's choosing.

In terms of the operational aspects of backing up data, some things always remain the same.

"Backups are a different animal," says Beak, "It's almost always done at night, and many organizations don't have 24/7 personnel, and those that do, are often staffed only for on-call or emergency response."

Unlike many IT systems, backup failures do not often create an alarm situation. In addition, the success or failure of a backup can be influenced by a number of outside factors. Q9 leverages its 24/7 staff to review all backup logs for errors, contact customers to assess any immediate risks and correct the underlying cause of the failure going forward.



"It's important to discuss and coordinate a response," says Beak. "If not, the remedy can sometimes be worse than the failure."

## IMAGING SPEEDS RECOVERY TIMES

Imaging is an often overlooked partner to a backup solution. Although data backup is essential, in the event the host equipment is compromised or damaged, having an up-to-date image of the operating system (OS) and applications can reduce the time to repair from hours, or even days, to minutes. Simply put, if the hardware, OS or applications aren't available, data can't be restored until they are repaired.

"We have numerous ways to capture images," says Beak. "There are advantages to having Q9 do it, in that we have the tools, personnel and processes in place in the event of a hardware failure and can act quickly to get a system back online.

The state of applications and operating systems is relatively static compared to data, but we still encourage, and have products to support, refreshing images on a regular basis, often monthly or quarterly."

Images, including larger images incorporating data, can also be used as a roll-back option when customers undertake significant software upgrades. Q9 has the ability to capture large images that are stored locally and can be restored on demand in the event something goes wrong. Ultimately, a combination of data backup and imaging is the best way to ensure critical systems remain up and running.

"Our processes and 24/7 operations ensure a fast response," says Beak. "With data backed up and a current image stored online and ready, even a critical event like a server failure can be handled with minimal disruption."