

Small Business Tips & Advice

There's No Stopping Business Continuity

(NAPSA)—The best way to keep your small or medium-size business running smoothly is to prepare for the unexpected. What some businesses may not realize is that the threat of any potential disruption now also affects its customer loyalty and revenue, as well as its reputation and brand.

With that in mind, experts at Dell have pulled together some tips to help small business devise a business continuity plan.

- **Review the functions that are vital** to the business and prioritize what needs to be done to safeguard them. Critical functions include computer systems that hold information such as order books and staff details. Keep a list of contact details for your staff, customers and supplies off-site so that you can contact them in the event of an incident.

- **Safeguard essential equipment**, including desks, telephones, PCs and photocopiers, and off-site resources such as checkbooks and files. PC safeguards include antivirus software, network security, as well as physical security such as locks for notebook computers. For critical notebooks, Dell offers Computrace, a "Lojack-like" tracking service for stolen notebooks.

- **IT security:** Back up data regularly and store copies off-site in a secure place. The hardware decisions are often clear and inexpensive. Three ways that are particularly effective for small businesses are devices that can be installed inside or outside computers, such as Zip drives, tape backup drives and mirrored hard drives in servers.

- **Practice restoring the data in an IT system** outside your own to ensure that it works, as well as defining the length of time that you can afford for disaster recovery.

- **Be clear about what your insurance policies cover** and what they don't so that there are no sudden surprises.

- **Review your insurance coverage regularly** to ensure

Business continuity now means protecting your confidential information from accidental or intentional misuses. (TM)

that it reflects any changes in the business.

- **Always keep and update an emergency pack**, which will include your business recovery plan, as well as a first-aid kit, mobile phone and masks to protect against fumes and dust.

- **Make an inventory of equipment**, products and any other assets to give you an overview of the business.

- **Make an arrangement for a temporary base.** In a disaster, you may not be able to operate out of your existing premises.

- **Test the feasibility of your plan** and review it once a year.

As part of its continued commitment to help small and medium-sized firms remain operational, Dell has a number of business continuity and business-critical solutions ranging from desktops and notebooks to Personal Digital Assistants and services.

To learn more on how you can prepare for the unexpected, visit www.dell.com/security.