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4 Drivers to Transform IT Availability

How to Increase Value and Decrease Risk
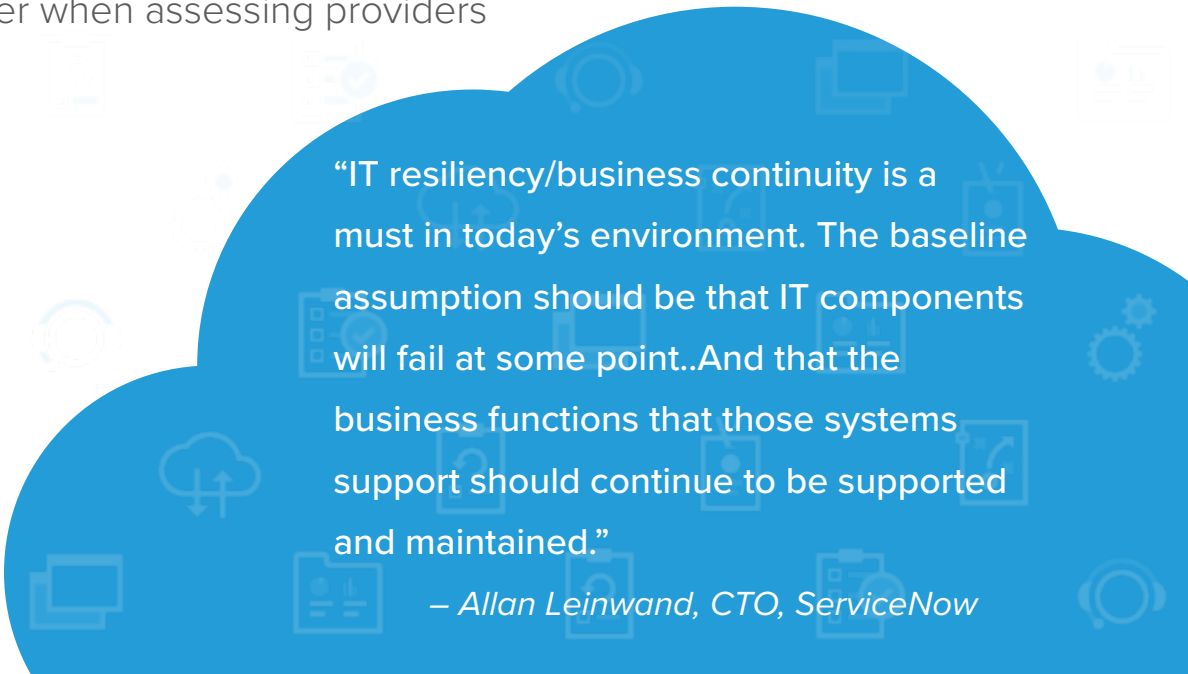
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Purpose of This eBook

The goal of IT availability is to deliver an uninterrupted digital experience so that you can better serve your customers and drive revenue. A critical element to supporting IT availability is an effective IT disaster recovery (DR or IT-DR) strategy.

Every business is different and not every company has the resources or requirements to provision best-of-breed technologies for the methodical management of IT availability and DR. For this reason, Bluelock has created this guide to help you understand what your options are, so that you can select the appropriate availability approach for your business.

This eBook will aid you in the following:

- Assess the range of IT availability options
- Understand motivations for changing existing approaches to IT-DR
- Determine factors you should consider when assessing providers

"IT resiliency/business continuity is a must in today's environment. The baseline assumption should be that IT components will fail at some point..And that the business functions that those systems support should continue to be supported and maintained."

— Allan Leinwand, CTO, ServiceNow

IT Availability Landscape

IT Availability Landscape

Understanding your current IT availability platform, strategy and options

Backups Only
Goal: Ensure Data
is Replicated

Internal DR
Goal: Build & Maintain
Fail-Over Option

**DRaaS (Self-Service
or Assisted)**
Goal: Minimize Downtime

Managed DRaaS
Goal: Achieve High
Levels of Assurance

Active-Active
Goal: 100% Uptime
& Redundancy

Slowest ⟶ **Availability** ⟶ **Fastest**

The IT availability landscape is intended to help companies identify their current IT-DR state and understand the options available to further align their strategy with business objectives.

Organizations tend to revisit their existing strategies for two primary reasons: to **increase the value of their investment** and/or to **further reduce risk.**

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Why Companies Revisit IT-DR Strategies

INCREASE VALUE

DECREASE RISK

FORCED REFRESH

OUT OF SYNC

REVENUE ENABLED BY TECHNOLOGY
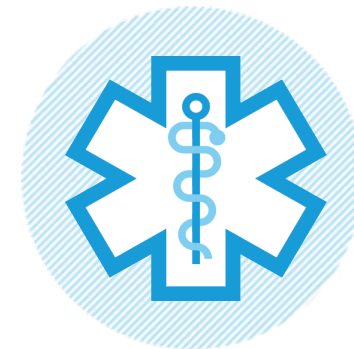
COMPLIANCE DEADLINE

IT STAFF

At the heart of any change to an existing DR strategy, an IT department typically strives to reduce impact on their daily operations, while also improving effectiveness.

These are, of course, not the only reasons companies revisit their DR. With over a decade of experience, these are the most common Bluelock has seen.

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4 Drivers for Change

1 Increase Value Amidst a Hardware Refresh

Common Traits:

- **Backups-only** solutions or **internal DR on depreciated gear**
- **Small IT team** or a team focusing on day-to-day operations
- Cost-sensitivities related to DR

FORCED REFRESH

Options to Evolve

This allows for companies to move DR to a cloud-based solution for added value, or improve the in-house replication toolset. Because purchasing new hardware means large upfront costs and a refresh in the future, many consider third-party cloud providers for a pay-as-you-go (Opex) solution. This reduces the need for future refreshes while providing access to modern DR technology for improved recovery times.

Add Internal DR

- Maintain gear, playbooks & all management of IT-DR in-house
- Select modern replication tools

Add Assisted or Self-Service DRaaS

- Self-Service: A cloud-based DR site
- Assisted: If advice, tools & templates from experts are part of your strategy

Add Managed DRaaS

- Receive benefits of other DRaaS models
- Experts help manage your strategy & maintain the health of your environment

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2 Increase Value While Syncing Production & DR

Common Traits:

- **Overwhelmed IT team** struggling to test and replicate new production apps
- Internal DR solution that is **running out of storage space** for data
- Has **depreciated or older technology** and is doing infrequent **backups only**
- **Physical and virtual machines** that create IT-DR complexities

OUT OF SYNC

Options to Evolve

Companies are moving data to a cloud-based solution for the ability to instantly expand storage capacity and implement modern tools. For legacy applications on physical machines, enlist a provider who can easily handle hybrid complexities. If your IT team is overwhelmed, consider a managed solution to keep track of new applications, ensuring that all data will be protected and continuously synced.

Add Assisted DRaaS

· *Flexible storage capacity in the cloud with advice from experts on replication*

Add Managed DRaaS

· *Benefits of Assisted DRaaS, plus experts who own the replication process, testing & maintainance of your recovery health*

2nd DRIVER

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3 Reduce Risk of Disruptions to Technology

Common Traits:

- High-stakes IT environment, dependent on availability
- Contains sensitive customer data
- Internal and external pressure on IT to protect data and systems

**REVENUE ENABLED BY TECHNOLOGY**

Options to Evolve

Every minute of downtime creates a hit to your revenue and reputation. IT is playing a more strategic role in the business and wants their top talent focused on high-impact projects, not day-to-day IT operations. For this reason, companies need a reliable provider to extend their IT team, maintain a highly-effective IT-DR strategy and co-own reducing downtime. If you're currently doing internal DR or Self-Service DRaaS, consider a solution to match the always-on demands of your competition.

Add Managed DRaaS

- *Complete assurance from trusted experts who keep systems protected for immediate recovery execution*
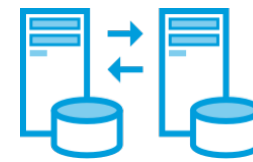
Add an Active-Active Environment

- *Near-zero downtime during an event for your always-on systems*
- *Some DRaaS providers offer this & an extended IT team*

Reduce Risk of Missing Compliance Deadlines

4

Common Traits:

- Contains **sensitive customer data**
- Experiences **pressure from stakeholders** for **proof of recoverability**
- **High-stakes business model**
- Needs **ongoing transparency** of recovery capabilities

COMPLIANCE DEADLINE

Options to Evolve

Companies within a regulated industry, or who serve customers under regulations, such as law firms, know that the key to success is providing proof to constituents. This proof should come in documented form so auditors can see you meet requirements with transparency. This makes selecting the right third-party provider crucial – onboarding must be fast, yet efficient, and the execution must be continuously maintained.

Add Assisted DRaaS

- *Aid in meeting compliance requirements*
- *Fast access to a secure, SOC 2 audited DR site*

Add Managed DRaaS

- *Continous transparency into your recovery health*
- *Expert help in providing proof of recovery, ongoing maintenance & testing of your environment*

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The IT Availability Landscape Isn't Limited to Next-in-Line

Where You Go is Up to You

The IT availability landscape isn't limited to next-in-line. You can jump ahead if you wish. Or, you may be doing backups only and decide you need to implement Active-Active on just one system, and/or you might add some form of DRaaS for a subset of systems. The most important takeaway is that **your strategy must be aligned to your business objectives** – which confirms the importance of having a full understanding of your organization's needs before committing to changes.

Actions taken to mitigate vulnerabilities and increase value for your business should be the driving force of change, but not the only factors. Choosing the right provider to partner with for any step in the IT availability landscape is key to your success.

What to Consider When Selecting a Provider

Look for a provider who will **commit to your SLAs in writing,** as well as **offer service credits** (reimbursements for unmet exptecations). When evaluating viable options for your business, consider these questions for added assurance:

- What services, processes and tools does the provider offer to ensure continuous success of your IT-DR strategy?

- Does the provider offer solutions that can meet your needs today and in the future when your straegy evolves?

- Will the provider assist in testing your solutions and to what degree?

- Is the provider able to customize hybrid solutions to ensure legacy applications are covered?

- How will you be able to see that your solutions are working and secure?

- Will the provider act as an extension of your IT team and does their service-orientation align with your company culture?

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Bluelock has successfully implemented and consulted on IT-DR solutions for companies across the IT Availability Landscape.

Jumpstart your IT-DR strategy by visiting our Practical Guide to DRaaS.