

# The Tsunami From Left Field!

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If you are like most small internet based business you manage your affiliate programs or order cycles effectively, ensure product is going out and the money is coming in, complete all your taxation paperwork on time and pay the bills etc. Blindly hoping it will all come together eventually. Facts are, most small internet based business is behaving like a cork bobbing around in the ocean. Fairly well exposed to the elements and prevailing currents.

What happens when disaster hits? The tsunami from left field, the one you thought could never happen to you! Reality shows the vast majority struggle to recover. Generally it can set them back months or years and has the potential to cause mass inconvenience. Imagine for one moment that all your past effort is now wasted with the resulting lost or dissatisfied customers and, in the extreme, imagine your exposure to possible bankruptcy.

You must be proactive and have a plan. It needs to be written down, it needs to be explicit in detail, and it needs to be in duplicate with one copy kept onsite and the other offsite. You need to know it backwards and you are never too small to have one. The longer you leave it the harder it is to remember everything. In fact you need to constantly grow the plan. Two examples of information you need to update are, when you sign up for new affiliate programs, or buy new software.

You need to create your own Disaster Recovery Plan!

Everyone has a different opinion as to what a disaster is. For some it could be Internet Service Provider (ISP) failure. This failure at a critical time could mean that an order deadline could not be met via the warehouse preferred method of email. Unchecked it could cause loss of profits. It also means you are unable to perform even basic business functions that require email. Your Disaster Recovery Plan could include all the fax numbers required so that you can continue to function until such time as the ISP is back online. The fax numbers could also be included in your Disaster Recovery Plan so that in the event of fire you are quickly and easily able to make contact with all your suppliers and arrange alternative delivery plans.

A random audit by the Business Software Association, whilst not a disaster, can be disruptive. If you have a well thought out Disaster Recovery Plan you can quickly supply all the required information relating to all programs on your computers and the auditor will be on their way. By not recording programs installed on your computers in your Disaster Recovery Plan Software Log (your log needs to include date of purchase, date of installation, serial numbers and registry key, type of licence etc. The log should also be kept with the backup copies of your software) it is easy to end up with unregistered software on your computers, especially if you fail to keep records. If you happen to

have pirated software the resulting fines can be just as crippling as any disaster.

Take the time to consider all the possible disasters you could experience and write them down. Consider how you would want to rectify the problem step by step and write this down also. It could include recovery from fire, power failure, hard disk drive failure even staff resignation. The point is write it all down now and include all passwords and ID's for all staff as well as affiliate programs you participate in. Do not overlook how important it is to also include all your insurance policy numbers along with the claims number. Ensure you have a full detailed inventory of all office equipment. You would be surprised how often the only record of this vital information is on the hard drive that has just failed caught fire and suffered water damage. Make sure you include an order of priority. The reason for this is that it is far easier to prioritise things now in the calm of day than in the heat of the moment when further costly errors of judgement can be made.

By now it is easy to see that even the smallest internet business must make provision for disaster recovery. By taking the time now, and planning how you will deal with the tsunami from hell, you should be able to sleep that little bit easier than if you have made no preparations at all. Remember your plan is never completed and is forever evolving the same as your business.

Don't become just another statistic. The old maxim "If you fail to plan you have planned to fail" is so true.

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