

Disaster Preparedness For Your Small Business: How To “Weather” Any Storm

(NAPSA)—In the event of a potential disaster, do you have a business continuity plan for your employees and your business? Are you backing up files on a routine basis, and could you recover them in an emergency?

On average, nearly 60 percent of businesses damaged in a disaster close after a year, according to the Association of Small Business Development Centers.

Last year’s devastating hurricanes heightened awareness of the importance of disaster planning for businesses, large and small. But destruction of your company’s infrastructure is not limited to natural disasters—it can happen anytime. Daily misfortunes like computer crashes, network breakdowns, and power outages threaten your business each and every day.

Having weathered four major hurricanes last year alone at its corporate headquarters in South Florida and across nearly 100 stores in the Gulf region, Office Depot has real-world experience in disaster planning and recovery. To help businesses be more prepared, the retailer has compiled “Disaster Preparedness: Advice You Can Depend on to Weather Any Storm.”

“A sound contingency plan can enable your small business to respond effectively to a crisis, and prevent that crisis from becoming a full-fledged disaster,” said Tom Serio, Director of Business Continuity Management for Office Depot.

According to Serio, the overarching principle in disaster planning and recovery is to protect your most valuable and irreplaceable assets: your people and your



The number-one rule in disaster planning and recovery is to protect your most valuable and irreplaceable assets: your people and your data.

data. Among the guide’s other recommendations:

- Keep contact information for employees and local emergency services, as well as key vendor and supplier information, updated and easily accessible. Establish a clear process for communications and plan how you will contact one another in different scenarios.

- Protect your business from faltering after a disaster by backing up key data at least once a week. Copy data to removable media, including DVD-R or CD-R discs, or to removable drives such as the Ativa McAfee Flash Memory Drive with anti-virus software.

- Move back-up software to a secure off-site location. Store copies and documents you use in day-to-day operations in a secure and fire-proof location like the Sentry Fire-Safe Electronic safe.

- Periodically review the data being stored on any back-up systems to ensure that the right data is being copied and that it can be restored.

Office Depot’s complete disaster-planning brochure is available for free at www.officedepot.com/getprepared.