

Can you trust a local data backup provider?



By [Iniel Dreyer](#)

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Not only is data essential for the smooth operation of any business, but perhaps more so is the protection and backing up thereof. Most organisations have - or should have - a data protection and business continuity policy in place. However, this needs to be underpinned by using a data protection and recovery partner you can trust.



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There are many options to choose from, from large multinationals to smaller local providers. While big brands such as Amazon are attractive, highly publicised [outages like they recently experienced](#) are causing consumers to lose faith in their capabilities.

The local advantage

Local partners can offer equal, if not better, service and are perfectly positioned to understand the nuances of South Africa's industry and data protection and privacy laws.

Many South African businesses compete at a global level yet, they still need to adhere to South African data security legislations such as the emerging PoPI Act. Local backup and data recovery providers understand these regulations and are geared to cater to the needs of South African business.

I have seen a gradual uptake of online support globally, and people are starting to grow more comfortable with the idea of remote assistance. Yet, have found that South African businesses still prefer one-on-one communication with their partners. Telephone assistance with real people or on-site engineers who can personally resolve issues in record time is still highly valued here.

Local providers are also far more flexible in terms of complying with customer requirements. Larger brands tend to offer set, pre-packaged services which organisations then need to comply with. There is little scope for movement or adaptation. A smaller, medium-sized provider, however, is likely to offer a more personal service, tailoring their solutions around their customer's own data policies to create service alignment which addresses those needs.

Locals keep up with the bigger picture

One of the key considerations that organisations are taking into account when selecting a service provider is the global shift towards the cloud. Businesses need to ensure they select a service provider who can adapt to changing business needs and shift with their customers as they grow. International brands are primed for trends like the shift to the cloud, however, don't discount local service providers.

Most local backup providers are partnered with international IT brands. Therefore, they are able to offer their products along with value-added services such as on-site support that are aligned with global trends.

Red flags

There are many considerations to take into account when selecting a service provider, however, there are also a number of 'red flags' that businesses should keep an eye out for in their elimination process.

One of the biggest oversights that organisations make when choosing their backup provider is the potential hidden costs. Data storage is relatively inexpensive; however, data retrieval can be very expensive, especially in South Africa where bandwidth costs are so high. Organisations need to bear this in mind and ensure they are completely aware of data restoration costs upfront.



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Some service providers amortise data retrieval costs into their monthly fee, which can prove less expensive in the long run, particularly when data needs to be accessed regularly. Others do not, and can charge exorbitant sums for data recovery. Organisations may wish to use these providers purely for long-term storage, retaining frequently accessed data on site.

Organisations should also be concerned if there is no easily available contact, especially from the initial beginning of the sales cycle. If you are unable to receive quick and informative service at the point of enquiry, chances are your service will be even less available when the time comes to retrieve your data. Having a touch point or contactable person at your provider is key to ensuring peace of mind that you and your business is a priority.

When disaster strikes and you need to ensure business continuity, the smaller players tend to shine. Not only do they typically have access to the expertise of their international partners quicker than direct customers would, simply due to partnership agreements and accompanying SLAs, but they often have smaller customer bases and can provide personalised care.

This is why, when it comes down to crunch time, businesses need the assurance of a trusted partner who is very much present, who understands their business personally. A partner who, quite simply, cares.

ABOUT INIEL DREYER

Iniel Dreyer is managing director of Data Management Professionals South Africa (DMP SA), a European specialist in complete solutions for secure and reliable data management. He is passionate about Information Technology and started his career working in a Personal Computer (PC) upgrade centre but gained extensive international experience early on in his career working on a number of international projects.

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