

Disaster Recovery in the Cloud

Geminare enhances Service Provider offerings

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enabling you to make the best storage decisions



Executive Summary

As Cloud and Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) markets emerged during the last few years, new entrants often sought to establish their presence and secure market share first, then build margins by adding value-added services once their customer base was established.

Cloud-enabled services are now emerging, and Service Providers seeking to capitalize on this market opportunity are following the same approach - staking a claim in the Cloud services space, and worrying about profitability down the road. Industry consensus is that the largest opportunity within this emerging market will be with small-to-medium-sized customers, as businesses embrace the Cloud to secure enterprise-grade services at mid-market prices.

Online backup is one area in which Service Providers staked strong claims in the Cloud. These services afforded businesses the opportunity to try Cloud services with little risk, and allowed Service Providers to effectively leverage their cloud infrastructure. However, the rush to economically store data online has quickly commoditized the online-storage market, forcing Service Providers to now seek out new value-added services for their existing customers, or risk losing them to lower priced competitors.

Service Providers should strongly consider the introduction of Cloud-based Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery (BC/DR) services as a means of bringing higher-value solutions to their customer base. These services further leverage the Service Provider Cloud infrastructure, and can be launched rapidly by partnering with a turnkey Recovery as a Service Provider, such as Geminare.

In assessing this BC/DR space, Service Providers need to seek out a low-touch delivery and ongoing support model. Cloud-based services need to be easy to deploy and manage, and ideally deliver extensive, high-value, customer self-serve components designed to dramatically reduce Service Provider operations and support costs.

With an industry-unique solution to Cloud-based BC/DR, Geminare is finding increasing success with MSPs, Telcos and Hosting Providers looking to expand their Cloud services. Its low-touch, Cloud Recovery as a Service offering provides on-going real-time replication of mission-critical production data to a remote, hosted location. When an outage occurs, failover to the remote environment is immediate, with no interruption to business function. The failover process is designed to occur automatically, but can be a scheduled or manual process according to the desires of the organization. Automation provides for continuous application availability during unplanned events or outages.

Geminare sells its services exclusively through channel partner offerings.

Emerging Opportunities

Businesses of all sizes continue to rate BC/DR high on their list of desired IT projects, usually within the top 5. With IT becoming an increasingly important aspect for a company's operations, many smaller firms now understand the importance of protecting their business operations.

However, many mid-sized and larger companies have not yet implemented Business Continuity or Disaster Recovery services. This is primarily due to the high cost and complexity of traditional BC/DR services, which typically create significant demand on IT resources, and require additional capital

expenditure. As businesses become more accountable to their end customers and the options for BC/DR continue to evolve, an increasing number of organizations know they need to take action and are planning to implement BC/DR solutions.

Factors considered in the end-customer's purchasing process include the following:

- ***The increasing importance of IT to businesses of all sizes and industries.***
As industries become more reliant on IT for their daily operations, interruptions in IT infrastructure availability (e.g. server failure) can have severe financial consequences.
- ***Increased use of virtualization (Cloud-based) technologies is enabling rapid, low-cost application deployment.***
As the IT as a Service market matures, vendors of Cloud services have become more reliable, efficient and low-touch, allowing end users to adopt virtualization technologies more easily, and without the need for in-house expertise.
- ***The need to deliver business application availability beyond traditional backup.***
Businesses are learning that being out of service for prolonged periods or losing customer data is not only unacceptable, but that it can also have a devastating financial impact.

Until recently, backup has been the primary method used to protect critical data. And while some technologies (e.g. disk-based data such as point-in-time copies, replication, and data de-duplication) designed to improve recovery time and recovery point objectives (RTO and RPO) are now on the market, customers are now seeking new, higher value solutions that go beyond the "enhanced" online backup solutions available today. Both business application owners and IT administrators are searching for technologies that will allow them to provide higher value business protection services, without significant infrastructure investments.

Evaluator Group Comment: Businesses are finding that it's no longer sufficient to just protect the data – protecting the applications that support the data and having restoration access to these application platforms are equally critical.

Protecting Applications, not just Data

The key difference between traditional data-protection services and the recent wave of Cloud-based BC/DR offerings is the application-centric focus. A *complete recovery* from a server or site failure requires not only access to up-to-date user data, but also to the application platform on which to use the data; a solution of significantly higher value to business owners. Historically, this level of application availability required a significant level of capital and operational costs over standard backup protection. Today, Cloud-based BC/DR services enable a new category of companies to utilize these services.

Evaluator Group Comment: Businesses of all sizes rely upon their mission-critical IT applications to operate. Cloud-based BC/DR provides companies, who were previously unable to implement dedicated BC/DR services, with the opportunity to attain availability levels approaching those of large enterprises.

Leveraging Investments

“If we build it, they will come” has been the approach of the first generation of Cloud-based Service Providers. However, investments in cloud infrastructure alone do not translate into value for customers. To remain competitive in an increasingly crowded market, Service Providers need to introduce offerings that can optimize existing cloud infrastructure investments.

By introducing a hosted business continuity or disaster recovery service offering, Service Providers can complement their existing backup or storage offerings. Providers will be able to leverage unused resources within existing infrastructure to reduce delivery costs per service offering. As a result, they will realize incremental revenue and profits from potentially under-utilized equipment.

Adding services that enable adjacent markets is a natural fit for Service Providers. Both mid-sized firms who may be adding online services for the first time, and remote or branch offices of larger organizations are potential users of hosted BC/DR service offering.

Green-field Opportunities

Entering emerging markets is typically more profitable than competing for existing business based purely on cost. The BC/DR market represents a new untapped, or “green-field”, market opportunity for many providers, especially for mid-sized businesses. Introducing BC/DR services allows established providers to open new lines of conversation with their customers about expanding their existing relationships. By entering new businesses, providers are not forced to take business away from an incumbent vendor, reducing competitive tension.

Evaluator Group Comment: EGI believes the next wave of cloud offerings will include BC/DR, due to the significant demand and high potential.

To date, there have been few alternatives for mid-sized companies interested in implementing BC/DR deployments. The choices have been to build it themselves or to turn to a traditionally high-priced BC/DR Service Provider. Due to the costs and logistics, these options have been challenging for organizations without significant capital, or those without geographically dispersed locations.

Geminare’s Platform

Geminare’s industry-unique platform renders electronic many of the traditionally manual processes associated with deploying and using DR/BC services. It affords its users the ability to automatically failover to a secure data center in the Cloud, following a planned or unplanned server failure. Failback to the production environment is equally seamless.

Geminare BC/DR RaaS Offering

Geminare's Recovery as a Service portfolio includes its award-winning Cloud Recovery service. The company sells only through channel partners, and its preferred go-to-market model is to embed its offering in a partner's cloud infrastructure. The Cloud Recovery service is easily deployed – usually within 30 days - and is seen in the market as a white-labeled service provided most often by telcos (e.g. Qwest, Bell Canada, MTS Allstream), Cloud Providers (e.g. Hosting.com) and Managed Service Providers (e.g. Long View). The service is bolstered by a comprehensive Partner Enablement program that includes extensive collateral, videos and full access to a Geminare inside sales and engineering team whose role is to help partners qualify opportunities and close deals.

Why Geminare

One factor that differentiates Geminare from competing technology is its low-touch deployment and multi-level administration model. Designed as a Software as a Service (SaaS) offering, Geminare requires no on-premises equipment. Combined with portal-based management, Geminare may be deployed remotely with no Service Provider personnel required on-site.

Evaluator Group Comment: The Geminare software-based platform is an ideal adjunct to Service Providers looking to quickly add services to their portfolio. It facilitates low-touch implementation and ongoing support, plus requires no end user on-premises equipment.

Geminare's Cloud Recovery Service allows Service Providers to deliver several critical items to its customers:

- Enables small to mid-sized business to quickly implement business continuity and recovery capabilities, perhaps for the first time
- Eliminates capital investment requirements with no on-site equipment required
- Reduces the need for dedicated IT staff to manage the recovery capabilities, both locally and at a remote facility

Thriving During Convergence

As with all mature markets, market consolidation is inevitable; winners and losers will be determined by their ability to deliver innovative services to their customers while commanding margin premiums. Telco's and other traditional, well-funded Service Providers have already begun this process.

Providers offering services which customers find uniquely valuable are those who will be able to retain their clients and maintain margins at a level required to remain ahead of their peers.

Conclusion

The successful delivery of business continuity and disaster recovery services requires a SaaS platform designed for Service Providers. The hardware investment alone that Service Providers have made is not valuable to customers without additional software that enables the delivery of specific services. Service Providers that will thrive are those who can quickly leverage their investments and enter new high-demand, high-margin markets.

Disaster Recovery in the Cloud

Complementary service offerings that are in high-demand, such as BC/DR, are logical product extensions for Service Providers. By offering uniquely differentiated services, providers will be able to attract and retain customers, while maintaining profit margins.

We find Geminare's offering fit these needs, both at the Service Provider and the end user level. Partners can rapidly deploy Geminare's Cloud Recovery service, opening up a new, lucrative market that leverages existing technology and customer relationships. Service Providers who choose this path will be able to differentiate themselves in the market by offering high-value business critical services to their customers. In turn, these providers will be better positioned to retain their customers while maintaining a margin premium.

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