

WHY A BACKUP SERVER ISN'T ENOUGH FOR SMBs

How one accounting firm almost lost everything when its on-site backup server failed



Geris Zebarth, Inc.
certified public accountants

Industry:
Accounting — CPA firm

Size:
Less than 50 employees

How They're Using CrashPlan for Small Business: Backing up all staff computers as well as the firm's network assets - three servers housing clients' QuickBooks databases.

What They Love: Restoring and backing up QuickBooks files in minutes to keep client work moving forward.

How We Help Restore Your QuickBooks Files: CrashPlan for Small Business makes it easy to restore a QuickBooks backup file to your computer and also restore that file to QuickBooks. [Learn how.](#)

Overview

"We were truly on the brink of losing everything—of going out of business," says Mike Stefanski, a CPA and the designated "IT Hero" at Geris Zebarth. The accounting firm is a classic warning tale for small business server backup: They knew their files and digital information contained incredible value—and they thought their on-site backup was enough. "Nobody realized how easy it is to lose our data," he says. After coming "this close" to losing it all—their files, their data and their business—they quickly deployed CrashPlan for Small Business. Today, CrashPlan isn't just this small business' disaster recovery solution, it's delivering tremendous value to staff and their clients on a daily basis.

Protecting the firm's—and clients'—crown jewels

Like many accounting firms, Geris Zebarth does most of its work in Quickbooks. The firm's CPAs and their 50-60 clients actively make changes in their Quickbooks database, directly entering and amending information. This Quickbooks data represents the bulk of the firm's value. "It's pretty much everything" to the firm, says Stefanski. For years, the small business had been using on-site server backup to cover its Quickbooks database.

Victims of server backup's simple flaws

A few years ago, as the firm prepared to close up shop for the holidays, the primary server failed. The failure triggered an alarm—one which staff recognized only as "an annoying whine coming from the server room," says Stefanski. To solve the problem, they closed the door and went on with their business. When the backup server failed a few days later, Stefanski

got a doomsday call. "I'm the designated 'IT Hero,' so I got a call when the backup server failed and Quickbooks went down," he remembers. With the prospect of recovery looking grim, Stefanski prepared to make a tough call to the firm's owner: "He was already on a holiday cruise, and I was going to call him and tell him we lost everything, all our clients' data—that his business was dead."

By sheer luck, Stefanski was able to resurrect the backup server and recover clients' Quickbooks data. As soon as this "miraculous recovery" was complete, Stefanski knew the small business needed a better disaster recovery solution.

"CrashPlan for Small Business is super simple, does what it needs to do, and it hasn't let us down. Each restore probably saves us thousands of dollars."

Mike Stefanski, CPA and designated "IT Hero" at Geris Zebarth

Backup that does everything it should

The firm needed a backup solution for both on-site and cloud-based backup. This would ensure that all Geris Zebarth staff, as well as all clients, could quickly access the database from anywhere. Adding cloud-based backup protected the firm from the server-failure disaster it had just experienced.

Why CrashPlan for Small Business?

Guaranteed disaster recovery: Solving the vulnerabilities of server backup

On-site + cloud-based backup: One platform that enables backup to on-site servers as well as cloud-based backup.

Confidently protecting highly sensitive client data: Security tools to protect clients' tax records and financial information.

No-hassle administration: Deploy in minutes; dependable functionality

Self-service file restores: Intuitive enough for anyone—no tech expertise required

Stefanski also knew the firm needed a business-grade product—one with advanced security features and administrative control functionalities fit to protect Geris Zebarth's clients' highly sensitive tax records and financial data. He knew of CrashPlan for Small Business' solid reputation among small- to medium-sized companies, and began looking into what the solution could offer. "CrashPlan for Small Business is backup that does everything it should," he says, "It does exactly what it's supposed to do, does it reliably, and does it for a reasonable cost." He liked that CrashPlan gave the firm flexibility and he loved the simplicity of the solution: "It's there when I need it - and it stays in the background otherwise."

Deploying CrashPlan for Small Business with QuickBooks

The firm deployed CrashPlan for Small Business to cover its Quickbooks database and all staff computers. "It was incredibly fast and easy," says Stefanski, "I think this is the beauty of CrashPlan: You just download it onto a machine, point it to the files you want to cover, and hit 'GO.'" Stefanski's colleagues quickly learned how to use CrashPlan to do self-service recovery. "I never had to explain to anyone how to use it. It's super intuitive," he says. Managing CrashPlan for Small Business has proven just as simple. "It always runs; I really don't have to worry about anything at all," says Stefanski, "I find it remarkable: What product can you use for five years and have zero complaints or concerns?"

Instantly recovering files, undoing client mistakes

Beyond disaster recovery, the firm quickly realized an everyday value of CrashPlan for Small Business. Because Quickbooks lacks a simple "undo" function, "CrashPlan is our CTRL+Z function on a daily basis," says Stefanski. "We have 50 or 60 clients in there making changes, and sometimes they do things they don't want to do—or things they thought they wanted to do. And our staff makes plenty of mistakes, too. They're human."

The firm uses CrashPlan to quickly roll back files to undo the mistakes—including several staff members who do their own self-service restores, without Stefanski's help. "It's super simple, quick, seamless, and it hasn't let us down," he says. CrashPlan has also helped the firm bounce back from problems with their individual computers. "Two weeks ago, my computer bit the dust," says Stefanski, "Within an hour, I was back up and running. I didn't miss a beat."

Saving untold time and money

For the firm, those everyday file restores are much more than a convenience. "Without CrashPlan, a lot of these mistakes would be almost impossible to undo—or would take countless hours," explains Stefanski. "Each restore probably saves us thousands of dollars." Their clients are well aware of this value, too. "They know everything is backed up, and they've experienced the same relief when we undo mistakes," he says, "We simply couldn't provide that kind of client experience without CrashPlan."

"Having come so close to losing it all, I can't describe how much CrashPlan means for us."

Mike Stefanski, CPA and designated "IT Hero" at Geris Zebarth

Delivering priceless peace of mind

Above all, Stefanski says it's peace of mind that's the greatest value of CrashPlan for Small Business. "We produce intellectual property for a living. Knowing that intellectual property is always securely backed up—that we can recover anything quickly, no matter what—I think we all sleep a lot better now," he says. "I tell anyone who will listen: I've been there. I've lived it. Having come so close to losing it all, I can't describe how much CrashPlan means for us."



FOR MORE INFORMATION: [CRASHPLAN.COM](https://www.crashplan.com)

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