

Computer Repair Business Lessons Learned

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Preface

Online backups are just another service you add to your company in order to obtain more business and to offer protection to your current customers. There are many players in this arena and some pretty large companies.

With this big of a market and the amount of companies out there doing it you might ask yourself how you can compete with them. Then answer is simple, your customers know you, and they trust you. If you offer them a solution to backups for their home computer or business then they will take your word, because they are already your customers.

Hopefully I have documented it in a way that everyone will understand and get a better idea of what Online Backups are and how they can be implemented it into your business. This can be a rather inexpensive service to add to you business yet a very valuable one to add also.

This document covers the way to utilize Vembu as your Online Backup solution.

Why Online Backups

Because you are growing your business and you need to be able to provide solutions of all types to all kinds of people. Backups are an integral part to any business or at least they should be. And now home users also need to be concerned. People have no problem storing things like pictures of their children for the past 5 or 10 years on their computer thinking they will be there forever. The first time you have to do a data recovery on a hard drive that someone did not have backed up and they saved their children's childhood on it you will see the concern they have. You will see even more concern if you are not able to get their pictures back. Everyone from home users to businesses needs to have backups in place so you should be the one providing that service.

Marketing Online Backups

Online backups are not as difficult to market compared to a lot of other things your business may offer. When you are working on a persons computer or at a business typically in conversation you should always bring up about backups and if they are doing them. In turn find out what they are doing. Ask questions like:

Are they backing up to a thumb drive and leaving it in their computer?

Are they backing up to an external hard drive connected through a USB port and never disconnecting it?

Are they doing it online at this time?

Have they ever tested their backup to see if their data is there?

A simple conversation of the "pros" of having a good backup of their data is typically all it takes in order to show someone how important it is.

Get a nice 3-fold put together or a one page letter identifying major points to having an online backup and how you can provide the service. Send out information in your newsletters that you send out.

Like I said previously even though there are companies in the market already they do not have direct contact with your customers like you do. That is the benefit you have over the competition.

Cost

Like I said this is all based on one specific model Online Backup solution. Your cost can vary depending on what you provide to your customers. With this solution utilizing Vembu software the cost will vary depending on your setup.

Example 1:

You have a server in your house/shop. In this example you can utilize the server as your backup server if you have enough storage space on it. To start with you will want probably at least 500 gig. You will install the Vembu software on your server and manage all your clients from this location.

Cost:

Vembu Software: \$0

Licenses (MSPEU ... that is what Vembu calls licenses)

Server License: \$60 per year

Now you have a customer that you are going to backup their data. You install Vembu on their computer and you will install another License on their computer.

Cost:

License: \$30

Total Cost:

In example one your total cost is \$90 for 1 FULL YEAR to Vembu. Now anything you charge the customer above and beyond \$90 is all profit.

Example 2:

You don't have a server and need to get disk space from somewhere. An example would be a place like Tektonic www.tektonic.net . Here you can get a Split Dedicated VPS account with different disk configurations. Some of the prices are:

200GB : \$125 per Month

300GB: \$200 Per Month

400GB: \$265 Per Month

You will install the Vembu software on your server and manage all your clients from this location.

Cost:

Vembu Software: \$0

Licenses (MSPEU ... that is what Vembu calls licenses)

Server License: \$60 per year

Now you have a customer that you are going to backup their data. You install Vembu on their computer and you will install another License on their computer.

Cost:

License: \$30

Total Cost:

In example one your total cost is \$90 for 1 FULL YEAR to Vembu. And depending on the plan you choose you would have to pay for the disk space. Of course using this plan it will run more money but it also has its benefits. You are taking the burden off having to run your own server and maintaining it. Using this example you would need to market your backup services to more customers to make it pay off for you.

Total Cost 10 Customers:

Server: \$60

Customers x 10 : \$300

Total Licenses: \$360 Per Year

Now if 10 customers are paying you just \$15 a month that is a total of \$2,160 a year income. If they are paying you \$25 per month that is \$3,600 a year income. As you can see it can get rather profitable.

Pricing

On the solution I am talking about in this paper below is what I am basing the pricing model on.

Of course depending on what approach you take or what software/provider you choose then your pricing will vary.

As you can see below this is broken down based on the amount of data that you will be backing up. Of course discounts are given for those that pay in advance.

Account Size	Data	Monthly Fee	Yearly Fee	Paid In Advance	Savings
Bronze	Up to 5 Gig	\$15.00	\$180.00	\$150.00	\$30.00
Silver	Up to 10 Gig	\$25.00	\$300.00	\$270.00	\$30.00
Gold	Up to 20 Gig	\$35.00	\$420.00	\$390.00	\$30.00
Platinum	20 to 50 Gig	\$50.00	\$600.00	\$550.00	\$50.00
Special	50+Gig	Custom	Custom	Custom	Custom

The overall cost to you is going to determine mainly if you have a server to support the backups and can do them that way. If you have to outsource your data storage then you will pay. Even though there are quite a few places that you can get very good prices and it is still worth it. Once you get a steady customer base for backups you will still make a profit doing this. If anything start off small and grow your data storage needs from there. Most of the companies out there will let you add 100GB whenever you would like.

As with any pricing scheme you can work the numbers anyway you want. I typically give a better deal to those that I have a maintenance plan with. You can also include the price in any maintenance plan that you offer people.

Setup of Vembu

I am always full of questions and it was no different with Vembu prior to installing. But, for some reason the install went very smooth and with no hitches. You will find that it is very easy to install and pretty simple to configure once you get it going. If you do not have a static IP address then you can use something like no-ip and set up your IP addressing needs that way also.

Once configured you will have a “server” and name it something like “backup server” (that is an example) then when you install a client’s machine you point it at a backup server and in this case you would point it at yours called “backup server”. You will just use the full domain name i.e. backupserver.mybusiness.com .

From the control panel you can also specify storage space. You can set everyone so they only get say 5GB of storage. Or if you are offering different plans you can break them down that way, or you can do it on a case by case basis.

You will find the administration is very easy to do and not too complicated to figure out.

The following pages just show some screen shots. For a more detailed look visit www.vembu.com

Disk Utilization

This screen shows you how much disk space you have and how much you have used. You can also show exactly how much each of your customers has used.

The screenshot displays the StoreGrid 2.3 Service Provider Edition web interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Backup', 'Restore', 'Reports', 'Events', 'Administration', 'Server Admin', and 'Help'. The user is logged in as 'admin' with a StoreGrid ID. The main content area is titled 'Server Settings' and contains an 'About this page' section with instructions on configuring backup locations and space. Below this is a 'Server Settings' table with fields for Server Name, Backup Location, Backup Space Allotted, CPU Utilization Settings, and Replication Status. To the right of the settings table is a 'Server Disk Space Utilization' summary box.

Server Settings	Server Disk Space Utilization
Server Name : ██████████ Edit All	Used Backup Space : 31.32 GB
Backup Location : E:/Program Files/Vembu/StoreGrid/ Edit ?	Free Backup Space : 268.68 GB
Backup Space Allotted : 300 GB Edit ?	MSPEUs added to date : 24
CPU Utilization Settings : High Edit	MSPEUs utilized to date : 2
Replication Status : Disabled Click here to enable replication for this server.	

New Customer

From this screen you can create a new user account.

The screenshot displays a web application interface for adding a new customer. The top navigation bar includes menu items: Backup, Restore, Reports, Events, Administration, Server Admin, and Help. On the right, there are links for Page Help, About Us, and Logout, along with a Peer Name dropdown and a Switch button.

The main content area is titled "Customer Management > Add Customer". On the left, a sidebar shows a tree view under "Server" with "Trial Customer" and "Default Customer" (containing a sub-item with a redacted name). Below the tree are buttons for "Trial Client Settings", "Add New Customer", "Client Migration", and "Local To Remote Server Migration".

The "Add Customer" form is divided into several sections:

- Set Customer Information:** Fields for Customer Name (with a red asterisk and a tooltip: "eg. Company name, Department name or Branch office location etc."), Email, Address, City, Phone, and Fax.
- Set Basic Configuration:** Radio buttons for "Auto Authorization" (Allow/Deny) and "Default status (when starting)" (Activated/Deactivated).
- MSPEUs Utilization Snapshot for [Redacted] [Server]:** A table showing:

Total MSPEUs on Server	24
Total MSPEUs allotted to Customers	2
Total Available MSPEUs on Server	22
- Space Utilization Snapshot for [Redacted] [Server]:** A table showing:

Total Backup Space on Server	300 GB
Total Backup Space allotted to customers	246.398 GB
Free Backup Space available in Server	53.602 GB

Below the snapshots, there is a question: "Do you wish to restrict this customer to use fixed number of MSPEUs?" with radio buttons for "No, automatically use MSPEUs as required." (selected) and "Yes, restrict MSPEUs utilization to [] MSPEUs.". There is also a field to "Restrict usage space to [0] GB for this customer" and a link: "Edit Disk Space allocated for Server / Customer / Client".

At the bottom of the form are "Save" and "Clear" buttons.

Customer Dash

This screen shows you how much space a particular customer has used and also if you click on the “status” icon it will show you the last backup and what was done.

The screenshot displays the storagrid 2.3 Service Provider Edition interface. The top navigation bar includes menus for Backup, Restore, Reports, Events, Administration, Server Admin, and Help. The user is logged in as 'admin' and the StoreGrid ID is visible. The main content area is titled 'List of backup schedules from client' and features a legend with various status icons and actions. A table below the legend shows a single backup entry with columns for Backup Name, Status, Finished Time, Files, Used Space, Original Size, and Actions.

storagrid 2.3
Service Provider Edition
Operating as Client & Server

StoreGrid ID : [Redacted] | Logged in as admin

Backup | Restore | Reports | Events | Administration | Server Admin | Help

Page Help | About Us | Logout

[Peer Name] [Switch]

Customer Management > Customer [Default Customer] > Client [Redacted] > List of Backup Schedules

List of backup schedules from client [Redacted]

Legend

- ▲ Backup is in progress
- ▼ Restore is in progress.
- ▶ Replication is in progress.
- ▲ Move Backup is Active
- 📅 Idle
- 🛑 Abort Backup
- 🛑 Abort Restore
- 🛑 Abort Server Side Restore
- ✅ Activate Backup
- ❌ Deactivate Backup
- 🔄 Proceed to Restore Backup
- 🗑️ Proceed to Delete Backup
- ✖ Delete is in progress

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Backup Name	Status ?	Finished Time	Files	Used Space	Original Size	Actions
[Redacted]	📅	Mon 16 Jun 2008 17:36:45	24059	5 GB	7.47 GB	❌ 🔄 🗑️

[Back](#)

Customer Report

This screen shows you a list of the last backups that were completed for a customer.

The screenshot shows the Vembu StoreGrid 2.3 web interface. The browser title is "Vembu StoreGrid - A flexible data backup software that works with your existing hardware. - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The page header includes the Vembu logo and "Service Provider Edition". The user is logged in as "admin". The navigation menu includes "Backup", "Restore", "Reports", "Events", "Administration", "Server Admin", and "Help". The sidebar on the left shows a tree view of the server structure, including "Trial Customer", "Default Customer", and "hand". The main content area displays a "Backup Report for [redacted]" with tabs for "Backup Report", "Restore Report", and "Deleted Report". Below the tabs, there is a text box stating "Backup [full and incremental] history for this backup schedule." and a table of backup history.

Start Time	End Time	Files				Space		Change in Used Space	Size of Uncompressed Added/Modified Data
		Added	Deleted	Modified	Skipped	Added	Removed		
Mon 09 Jun 2008 06:22:46	Tue 17 Jun 2008 08:06:33	26110	-	-	0	-	-	6.15 GB	8.71 GB
Remarks : Success									
Tue 17 Jun 2008 08:04:19	Tue 17 Jun 2008 08:06:33	2	0	10	0	685.57 KB	481.82 KB	203.75 KB	1.06 MB
Remarks : Success									
Tue 17 Jun 2008 07:02:56	Tue 17 Jun 2008 07:03:22	0	0	4	0	21.48 KB	9.81 KB	11.67 KB	15.21 KB
Remarks : Success									
Tue 17 Jun 2008 05:59:11	Tue 17 Jun 2008 06:00:35	0	0	7	0	681.39 KB	478.63 KB	202.76 KB	1.07 MB

Backup Schedule

This screen will allow you to create a new backup schedule.

The screenshot shows the 'storagrid 2.3 Service Provider Edition' interface. The user is logged in as 'admin' and is in the 'Server Admin' section. The main task is 'Create a new Backup Schedule'. The interface is divided into five steps:

- Step 1: Schedule Name** - A text field for 'Enter Backup Schedule Name'.
- Step 2: Select files and folders to Backup** - A tree view showing the file system structure with checkboxes for selection. Items include C:/, E:/, F:/, My Documents, Microsoft Outlook Express, Mozilla, Internet Explorer Settings, FireFox, Desktop, Registry, and SystemState. A 'Files/Folders Filter' button is at the bottom.
- Step 3: Set Basic Configuration** - Includes 'Backup Type' (Same Machine or Remote Server), 'Select Backup Server(s)' (with a test connectivity button), 'Set CPU Utilization' (High-[Default]), 'Set Compression' (Enable-[Default]), 'Intelli-Delta Backup' (Enable-[Default]), and 'Keep the last [05-[Default]] versions of backup data'.
- Step 4: Set Password Protection** - Includes 'Password Protect this backup' (Enable/Disable), 'Encryption Key Size' (64-[Default] bit), 'Type Password [6 - 8 Chars]', and 'Confirm Password'. A note at the bottom states: 'Note: Don't lose this password. You will not be able to restore your data without this.'
- Step 5: Scheduling [Decide when to Backup]** - Includes 'Continuous', 'Run Every Few Hours' (with 'Run Every' set to 01 Hours and 00 Mins), and 'Select all days' (with checkboxes for Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday). Other options include 'Run Daily', 'Run Weekly', and 'Run Once Only'. A 'Hourly Backup' note explains that files are backed up every few hours/minutes. Buttons for 'Pre & Post Backup Commands' and 'Advanced Options' are at the bottom.

Computer Medic's Online Data Backup Solutions

Data is at the core of your business. Your emails, customer records, documents, and invoices – they're all data you can't do without! A data disaster can be crippling for a business, and the cost of downtime is typically in tens of thousands of dollars!

Backup irreplaceable data from your desktops, laptops and servers – with Computer Medic's Online Data Backup service. With state of the art software and robust infrastructure, we provide you an enterprise class online backup service that ensures that you can quickly get up and running after any kind of data disaster!

Why Backup Online	Service Highlights	How it works
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online backups are the easiest and surest way to protect your data.• Backing up to an offsite server ensures that you can recover your data even in case of a physical disaster, theft or loss.• Online backups also eliminate many of the error prone steps associated with traditional backup methods like tape. Users can restore 'point in time' versions of files without loading tapes one after the other.• With our online backup solution, your data is encrypted and compressed even before it leaves your computers.• After the first full backup, only incremental block level changes are sent – optimizing bandwidth & storage usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intuitive & user friendly interface works from within your browser!• Backup workstations & servers• Backup all kinds of data: Documents, emails, Exchange, SQL, etc• Military strength (up to 448 bit) encryption of your data before it leaves your machine!• Powerful Compression• Intelligent backup of changed data only – after the first backup• Supports Windows, Linux, Mac OSX & FreeBSD• Multiple scheduling options including continuous data protection & multiple full backup scheduling• Point in time restores allow you to simply point on a version and click to restore	<p>We simply install an agent on each computer (workstation /server) that you wish to protect. After the initial configuration, backups happen automatically and we can monitor and manage the process remotely – without ever accessing your data!</p> <p>We could even implement a staged backup solution for you wherein you could back up to a local server and have that replicate to our remote server as insurance against disaster!</p> <p>Pricing depends on the number of installations and the amount of data stored. Accordingly, you will be billed monthly!</p> <p>Note: You are charged on compressed data storage; additionally, our intelligent incremental data feature backs up only changed blocks after the first backup</p>

**DON'T WAIT TO FIND YOUR COST OF DOWNTIME!
BACKUP YOUR DATA NOW!**

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Afterword:

In this business it's all about having services to offer your customers. With online-backups this is just one more of those services that you can now affordably offer. Once you it all setup it's pretty much just adding users over time and you should see a steady source of income form it.

I should clarify that this document mainly covered Vembu but I am sure there are others on the market. I tried out a few other solutions but came back to Vembu.

Lastly, I'd like to thank Calebe another computer business owner for allowing me to E-mail him numerous times about Vembu with my million questions....

Daniel W Hand

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Author

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