

Why data management is a necessity - Even for SMEs

 By [Hemant Harie](#)

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There is a perception amongst small to medium enterprises (SMEs) that data, while important, is not as critical as it is for a larger business. However, this could not be further from the truth.



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Data is literally the lifeblood of the modern organisation, no matter the size. Without it, productivity ceases, particularly in a world where work from home has become a requirement. Added to this, the Protection of Personal Information Act (PoPIA) applies to all businesses regardless of size, which means that data must be protected from a legal standpoint. SMEs need both a data management strategy and a data management solution to ensure business continuity and to prevent compliance breaches, and a managed service is often the most efficient and cost-effective way to achieve this.

The growing data challenge

We live in a digital world, and this means that practically everything we do generates data. Working from home also resulted in many SMEs making the move into the cloud, which means not only are they generating more data but it is also being created via multiple channels. Add to this the growing internet of things (IoT), connected devices, sensors and more, and the volume of data is becoming vast.

While this data generation may not be at the same scale as large enterprises, it is still growing, and the fact is that data management needs are the same no matter what volume of data is involved. Smaller businesses are more agile and can manoeuvre fast, which has created the impression that they are able to 'make a plan' should a disaster strike. However, the fallout of a data loss event has the potential to be catastrophic, and the true impact is often not understood until it happens – by which point it is too late.

Strategy is essential

SMEs have tended to follow a reactive approach to data, but this is no longer a feasible solution. Often, budget is cited as a

major reason for the lack of a data management strategy, but again, this is not an option anymore. PoPIA compliance requires businesses to prove that they are managing data effectively, which means they need to become more proactive and adopt an effective strategy and solution. This approach makes sound business sense. As SMEs generate more data, there is increased risk and increased impact should data be lost. The PoPIA regulation is simply bringing this into the spotlight.

Managed services are the solution

A cloud or subscription-based service is the easiest and most efficient way for SMEs to adopt data management solutions, however, this does not necessarily address the need for an effective strategy. Laws are always open to interpretation, and it can be a challenge to understand how data privacy restrictions apply to each individual business.

A managed service provider will have the skills to not only ensure compliance laws are effectively applied to your data environment but that data is managed efficiently to reduce business risk. They will also be able to provide a proactive approach, through a cost-effective, OpEx driven service, that delivers a more efficient data strategy to support business and decision-making capabilities.

Level the playing field

Using a managed service provider to deliver data management gives SMEs peace of mind that their data is protected with enterprise-grade solutions, and available whenever and wherever it is needed, without affecting the agility of their business. Large enterprises have significantly more compliance hoops to jump through compared to SMEs, so with enterprise technology and thinking, SMEs are empowered to compete on the same level, but with greater agility, giving them a significant edge.

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