

A man in a dark suit and tie is shown in profile, talking on a black corded telephone. The background is a high-angle, panoramic view of a dense city skyline, likely New York City, with numerous skyscrapers and buildings under a clear sky. The image is split diagonally from the top left corner, with the white background of the logo and text on the left and the cityscape on the right.

Yes, We're Open:  
**How the Right Business  
Phone System Helps Ensure  
Business Continuity**

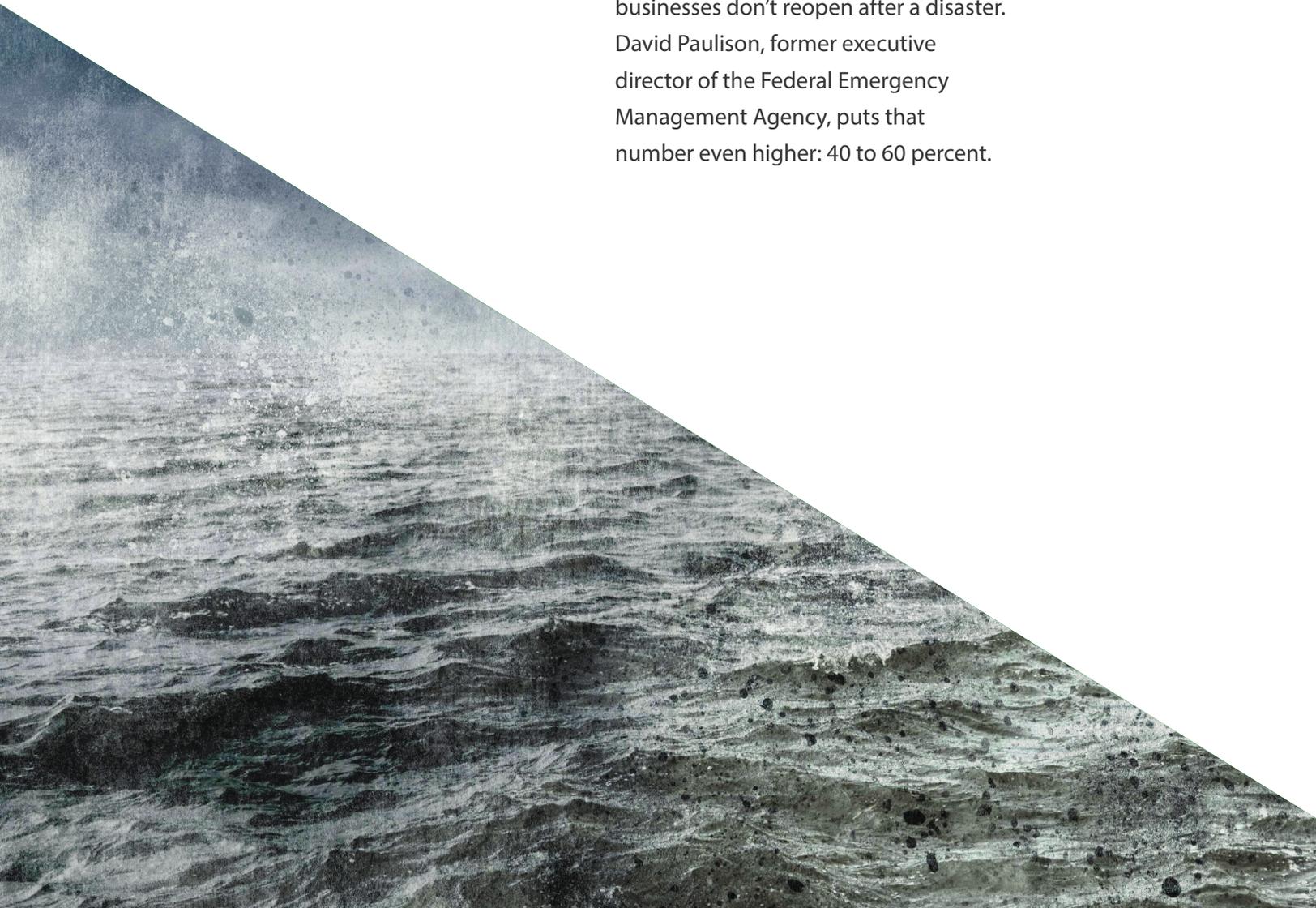
[www.netfortris.com](http://www.netfortris.com)



## When disaster strikes

When disaster strikes - a weather event, fire or other emergency - attention naturally focuses on the wrecked houses, lost possessions and crippled services. But what about the impacts on businesses - especially on smaller ones?

According to the Institute for Business and Home Safety, 25 percent of businesses don't reopen after a disaster. David Paulison, former executive director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, puts that number even higher: 40 to 60 percent.



For larger businesses that often rely on smaller companies for products and parts, a lengthy recovery after an emergency can mean breaks in supply chains that slow deliveries and damage relationships.

In the aftermath of a disaster, communication with customers is crucial. Taking a proactive approach in letting customers know what is happening and when things will improve can save a business relationship.

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## By the Numbers

38.9%

38.9 percent of employees reported missing multiple days of work due to bad weather, power outages or similar disruptions.

47.8%

47.8 percent can't work effectively when the office is closed due to emergencies, power outages or natural disasters.

56.6%

That number increases to 56.6 percent for midsize companies (with between 101 and 250 employees).

In the next few pages we will show how a cloud-based phone system can bolster business continuity. We'll take a look at how the right system can ensure employee safety, data security, and uninterrupted communication with employees and customers.



## Elements of Disaster Preparation

Many businesses make preparations for disaster. Those in Atlantic coastal regions, for example, are very aware that June 1 marks the start of hurricane season. But organizations need to do more than focus on specific threats. They need to make plans to deal with any disaster and then specify the goals of those plans. Here are three universal goals that should be part of any disaster plan:

**Employee safety** — In the aftermath of a disaster, the security of your staff is Priority 1.

**Data security** — Your data needs to remain secure and available even if the office itself isn't in operation.

**Uninterrupted communication** — The ability for employees to stay in touch and work remotely can make all the difference in keeping a business going.



## Disaster Preparation: Employee Safety

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After Hurricane Sandy battered the Northeastern United States in 2012, many employees were unable to get to their offices because of travel conditions, power outages and damage to facilities.

In such stressful times, the safety of your employees is always the first priority. Confirming that people are safe requires you be able to communicate with them. Getting them back to work demands systems that let them communicate even if that means they work remotely.

Take the insurance industry. These companies need to be functioning quickly to assess losses and process claims. Lengthy delays here have a domino effect on recovery.

A cloud-based business phone system keeps people connected. Because it is housed all or in part offsite, it can be up and running even if the office is not. With it, employees can confirm they are safe. When the time is right they can get back to work with the same tools they use at the office every day.





## Disaster Preparedness: Data Security

More and more, work is less a place and more an activity. In the aftermath of a disaster, the place can be unavailable. But the data on which the business depends must remain secure and available to the people who need it.

Cloud-based systems keep information offsite, giving organizations control as well as flexibility. Businesses find it much easier to monitor and make changes for different customers if they can simply log into an online administration or control panel. They also help business owners who want to pull reports while working remotely.

### By the Numbers

48%

48 percent of small businesses that have two to 20 employees have experienced data loss.

54%

54 percent of data loss resulted from hardware/software failure. Viruses accounted for 33 percent and theft accounted for 10 percent.

31%

31 percent of business owners consider backing up data as a hassle.

Source: Survey by Carbonite

# Disaster Preparedness: Uninterrupted Communications

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Every business relies on communication. Even in disaster scenarios, customers still need to interact with you.

Situations like Hurricane Sandy demand cloud-based systems that can keep a business running even when the office is closed. Such systems fall generally into three types:

**Public Cloud:** All the information resides in the cloud and can be accessed and changed at a moment's notice.

**Private cloud:** This allows customers to bring their own voice networks and NPLF networks, along with having more control over the servers in the data center.

**Hybrid:** The server resides in the customer's office, but the control panel — the brain of the operation — is in the cloud. This allows the user to change things easily by logging into a web browser, and it protects the information should anything happen to the hardware on site. The technology allows for the restoration of communication, user data, voicemails and call recordings.



# Maintaining Standards of Customer Service

Everyday customer service is an integral part of any business. Customers need to hear a live voice whenever possible. Customer service representatives need to be able to communicate the realities of your business situation at the time.

A plan used by communications-consulting firm, Cognito, after Hurricane Sandy is an example of solid communication efforts through a disaster, and how a cloud-based system would have further enhanced those efforts.

The company re-routed its email through a mirror system in another location, so that it would remain functional. The company sent out an internal contact list of phone numbers and emails, and made sure everyone was safe after the storm passed. Cognito sent an email update to clients shortly after, which founder Dan Simon said, "generated lots of 'same here' and 'best wishes' emails in return."

However, Simon acknowledged that additional cloud capabilities would have helped the company better get through the storm's aftermath.

"Too many of our vital documents are housed on a server we shut down at 1:07 on Tuesday morning and didn't switch back on again until 4:15 on Thursday afternoon," he wrote in Forbes. "In the future I want to look at ways to house all of our mission-critical material virtually and enable our teams to be able to access it in the most mobile-friendly way possible."



# Clarifying Situations with Customers

In the case of a disaster, employees' priorities naturally shift to the safety and well-being of their families. This makes the ability to communicate with customers that much more important, so that you can let them know what the situation is and when they can expect your business to be fully operational.

An advanced phone system will allow for an on-hold message that can be easily and frequently customized. It can say something to the effect of, "We're very sorry. Due to the recent storm, we are unable to answer your call, but we anticipate being available tomorrow." In worst-case scenarios, you can let them know where else they can go for assistance.

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# About NetFortris

NetFortris provides flexible, scalable, cloud-based voice and data communications customized with the exact security and compliance your business needs. Multi-level protection, cloud-based backup and bi-directional failover ensure business continuity while big data analytics with real-time service control improves your operational performance. NetFortris also serves its customers with carrier-grade networks, business and communications applications, and expert service. Our solution engineers work with you to design a fully managed and automated system tailored for your business.

NetFortris acquired Fonality in 2017 to enhance our VoIP and UCaaS suite of services. We are Headquartered in Plano, Texas, and Seattle, Washington, with three NOCs supporting customers 24/7/365.

