



## Hackers and Cyberattacks: Your Small Business Protection Guide

Cybercrime and Hacking are a major concern because of the sheer volume of data companies store digitally. Small businesses no longer keep credit card and social security numbers, addresses, phone numbers, purchasing histories and other information in file cabinets or on spreadsheets. That information is floating in cloud storage in structured data that allows access to multiple files through interrelated folders. Hackers can jump from file to file accessing related data.

Cybercrime and hacking incidents in huge corporations like Target and Sony make front-page news because they affect millions of people and cost immense sums. The hack that shut Sony down cost \$170 million. Cybercrime costs the American economy more than \$100 billion annually. While the number of hacking events is dropping, the cost per event has nearly doubled. The heaviest cost proportionally, though, may be to small and medium businesses.

According to McAfee, 90 per cent of small businesses do not use data protection for company and consumer information. Less than half [encrypt](#) their email to prevent phishing attempts. That is worrisome because the average cost of a hacking event to a small business may exceed \$100,000.

There are several things that can be done, in addition to encryption and other cyber security methods, to make business data more secure. It starts with internal auditing of security and monitoring the websites employees access. In addition, business should thoroughly vet third-party vendors to make certain their systems are secure.

A haphazard approach to data storage and utilization is an open invitation to hackers. Reliable, secure system management by specialists can save small business owners the expense that comes from "fixing" data leaks, but it can also save them from stressing and worrying over cyber security when they could be concentrating on growing their corporations.

[Contact us](#) for information about how our IT services, systems and supports can take the stress out of protecting your sensitive data and help you focus on being the creative entrepreneur you want to be.

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