Northdoor Managed Services:
Backup As A Service

Drawing on 30 years of experience in building complex infrastructure solutions for leading enterprises, Northdoor's Managed Services offerings enable our clients to focus more on their core business and less on the underlying technology. Based on Compass from Cobalt Iron and IBM Spectrum Protect solutions, Northdoor offers backup as a fully managed service, keeping enterprise data protected while ensuring exceptional reliability, performance and cost-efficiency.

Data is the most valuable enterprise asset in the digital age. Wherever it is generated, stored or used, enterprise data must be protected against corruption, loss or unauthorised access. For both business continuity and regulatory reasons, enterprises must ensure that their data is appropriately protected, and that they can recover in the event that one or more production systems suffer an outage.

The majority of organisations use multiple different backup solutions as part of their broader data protection arrangements, and each solution brings its own management challenges, performance issues and required skillsets. Coordinating backup activities in a reliable and compliant way is therefore complex, costly and time-consuming. It is usually difficult to gain a clear view of backup status across the enterprise—particularly across multiple data centres and public clouds—and high failure rates leave the organisation exposed to risk and scrambling to perform corrective maintenance around the clock.

Built on deep skills in IBM Spectrum Protect (formerly Tivoli Storage Manager), Northdoor's backup-as-a-service (BUaaS) offering removes both the day-to-day administration and the long-term planning burdens from enterprises, while ensuring that appropriate policies are defined and enforced across all systems. The solution uses AI-powered automation to intelligently protect data and provide ongoing optimisation. Covering all major enterprise platforms, including IBM i and IBM z/OS, the Northdoor service unites all backup environments across any number of sites under a single point of control. This helps enterprises increase their backup success rate in order to reduce risk and management cost.

With Northdoor responsible for managing backups, enterprises can move internal staff away from low-value administration, eliminate the complexity and cost of running multiple solutions, reduce concerns about finding and retaining technical staff, and gain confidence that all data is appropriately protected. Choosing Northdoor BUaaS also enables enterprises to replace spiralling capital expenditure with predictable, controlled operational costs.

Northdoor BUaaS

Every Northdoor backup-as-a-service engagement begins with a comprehensive audit and review of the existing backup landscape, covering both on-premises and hosted or cloud-based elements. During this review, Northdoor:

- Catalogues existing data stores, backup jobs, backup policies, security and access controls, and more
- Establishes performance baselines for backup and recovery
- Identifies current and potential future problem areas and performance hotspots
- Provides a detailed report recommending best-practice improvements
- Determines future backup policies and schedules, ensuring that the future architecture will meet business needs
- Defines SLAs, KPIs and reporting schedules for the managed service

Northdoor's backup-as-a-service (BUaaS) offering falls under our ManageLine brand, which provides proactive monitoring and full administration covering all aspects of support, assistance and best-practice advice. The ManageLine approach ensures that the service always remains operational and in optimal condition.

ManageLine engagements are backed by rigorous, client-defined service-level agreements (SLAs) and key performance indicators (KPIs). Northdoor tracks and manages all activity and provides detailed reporting back to clients on a regular basis.

Once the SLAs are agreed, Northdoor deploys backup agents to all systems and sets up a single point of control in the cloud. Where enterprises are using backup solutions other than IBM Spectrum Protect, Northdoor handles the migration and provides a choice of backup target: either an existing storage system or an Accelerator built on IBM storage. In the latter case, Northdoor also provides this as a fully managed service, removing the storage management overhead.

Following initial backup runs, Northdoor runs comprehensive recovery tests to prove the completeness and viability of the backed-up data. During ongoing operations, Northdoor handles all administration and maintenance as required to meet or exceed SLAs, and provides continuous reporting through intuitive executive dashboards.

Northdoor monitors ongoing performance and usage, giving clients advance warning when capacity upgrades are required and advising when policies should be updated. The underlying backup technology uses AI and machine learning to constantly monitor and optimise backups as source environments change and as lessons are learned in other organisations' backup landscapes. In practice, this almost eliminates failures in backups, providing much more dependable protection for data.

As additional services around data protection, Northdoor can assist with:

- Reviewing and optimising GDPR compliance

- Upgrading existing IBM storage systems

- Introducing IBM FlashSystem storage to reduce latency

- Adopting software-defined storage with IBM Spectrum

- Migrating data stores to the IBM Cloud or other major public clouds

- Architecting and provisioning disaster recovery resources in the cloud

Why Northdoor Managed Services?

With Northdoor Managed Services providing a complete backup-as-a-service solution, companies can improve their focus on core business objectives, secure in the knowledge that their mission-critical data is appropriately protected and preserved. Northdoor works to keep all enterprise data backed up across multiple locations – typically including the cloud – rapidly, reliably, and in a provably recoverable way. Our economies of scale and deep technology skills enable us to deliver higher quality of service at lower costs than our clients could achieve with the equivalent in-house personnel.

As the number and variety of enterprise systems increase, ensuring that data is backed up in a reliable and compliant manner is increasingly challenging. Enterprises need not only technical skills, but also the ability to set up and maintain backup and recovery policies for multiple different workloads, potentially in multiple different regulatory environments. Northdoor's consultants benefit from decades of collective experience in defining and running enterprise backup policies, backed by ongoing training and certification, enabling them to achieve true expertise.

Our economies of scale and expertise also enable Northdoor to eliminate clients' concerns around reliance on key in-house staff, as well as reducing the direct costs of employment. As a further financial benefit, the Northdoor ManageLine offering for BUaaS provides budget certainty through fixed-fee monthly pricing, with no hidden extras.

Where clients choose Northdoor BUaaS alongside other support contracts for hardware, operating systems and databases, a single dedicated Service Delivery Manager will provide responsive, jargon-free communication to keep services in line with business objectives. This clarity in management enables our clients to dedicate themselves to core business issues, leaving as much of the technology as they wish in the hands of our experts.