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When most clients call you, they start with a question about taxes, bookkeeping, or whether they can afford an upcoming business expense. But every so often, clients may call with more serious questions:

- *“My office was flooded and my records are lost, what happens if I can’t recover them?”*

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help them build the infrastructure to weather a storm.

September was National Preparedness Month, so I took the time to speak with accountants at 4700Group to see what they would recommend to other accountants and bookkeepers that want to help their clients prepare for natural, cyber, and accidental disasters. One of the common threads: use cloud-based tools.

“If a client is cloud-based, they can be operational within a fraction of time after a disaster,” says Gale Kirsopp. “Cloud-based systems are accessible from any mobile device, so if their cell phone is still working, they could still be operational. If all their software applications and data are stored on local servers/computers, in addition to getting new hardware, they will have to find backups of the information and reconstruct their data.”

Here are their recommendations for how you can improve your clients’ disaster preparedness:

## **Lead by Example:**

One of the easiest ways to introduce clients to the cloud-based tools that can help them weather a disaster is to show them how you use cloud-based tools in your everyday business. Not only can exposing your clients to the cloud-based tools that you use alleviate any concerns that they may have with storing information in the cloud, but you can also use the opportunity to show how operating cloud-based tools can be one of the best strategies for becoming operational after a disaster.

“For our ongoing monthly clients, part of our package pricing includes a technology component,” says Susan Matautia. “As part of the onboarding process, we explain the advantages of using cloud-based applications for both themselves and working with 4700Group.”

# Audit Your Clients' Accounting Workflow:

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primary considerations. Security of data from attack and data security from failure, how often does the company back up their systems and your data?

## Discuss the Benefits of Stakeholder Access:

When accounting and bookkeeping records are stored in a cloud-based tool, stakeholders can access them from any device that has an Internet connection. Not only does this mean that your clients can access their own data in the event of a disaster but it also means that you can step in and maintain their finances on their behalf after a disaster – or even during business as usual.

“With cloud-based tools, we have access to our client’s data without intruding on their work day,” says Kirsopp. “We do not require scheduling time to be in their office, nor do we need to take over one of their computers to work remotely or compromise security by storing their information in multiple places.”

## When Clients' Data is Stored in the Cloud, Everyone Sleeps Easier

It's true that every cloud-based application is unique. As you help your clients find the right cloud-based tools for their business, you're likely to encounter challenges as you and your clients navigate the learning curve of adopting new tools and changing your workflows. But in the long run, cloud-based tools can save both you and your clients time—and everyone can rest a little easier knowing information is safe even in a disaster.

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