



PART 2

CORPORATE PROTECTION

The second in a three-part series, this issue we look at vulnerable SMEs, how to stop the fraud, protect the data and make sure your business is secure.

BY KNEEZ BUKHARI

As an SME, you are vulnerable. Every business, regardless of size, needs an active security strategy in place and, even though small businesses won't have as much data as large enterprises, if your data is important to you, it will be important to others.

Don't leave yourself open to theft. Even if you don't think you have anything that would matter if it fell into the wrong hands, you'd be surprised at what the 'wrong hands' could do with just a few pertinent bits of information. It only takes three pieces of information and your identity could belong to someone else.

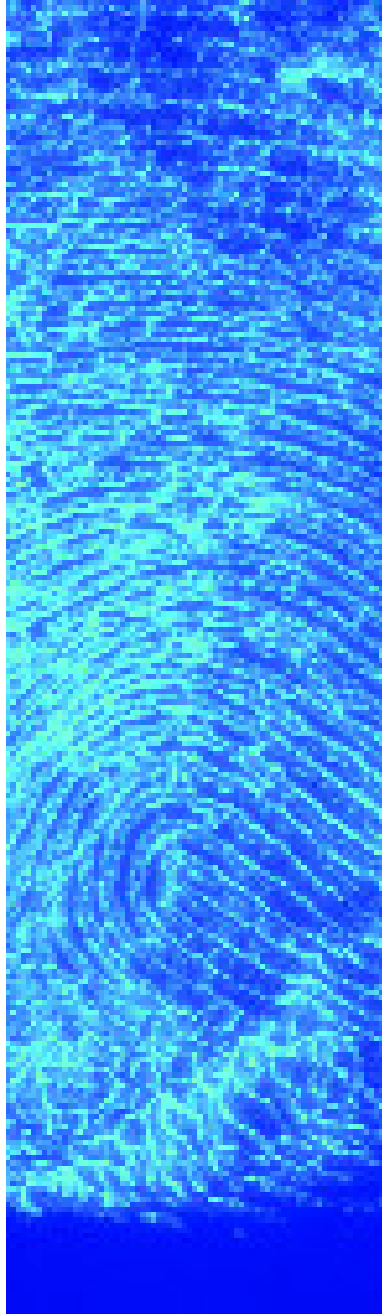
All sensitive data must be protected. Ask your clients how they would rate the value of their confidential information. What would it cost them and their company if it were to be stolen? What could, potentially, happen if it were to fall into the hands of a competitor or an ex-employee?

To protect data that needs to be kept, the best option is a safe. Preferably one that is also fire and flood proof to cover all avenues. >>

When selling these products, says, Tony Stead of Safe International, "It is really important for dealers to understand their customer's requirements and ensure that they provide the correct advice." Very basically, you need to ask what items your customers need to protect, what they want to protect them from, what their value is and whether or not the chosen safe meets the requirements of their insurance company.

While we're on the subject of safes, you may want to advise your customers that it is estimated that if a company's records are lost in a fire, 17% can no longer produce a financial statement, 14% suffer a reduction in credit rating and 43% go out of business completely. As Stead says, "These statistics make alarming reading and highlight the need for secure and suitable storage."

For data that does not need to be kept, shred it! Don't rip it up and throw it in the bin, don't start a bonfire or attempt to flush it. Buy a good quality



Another fact to mention when promoting shredders, is that it's the easiest and safest way to comply with European Regulations on the protection of individuals with regards to the processing of personal data by the community institutions and bodies.

A recent survey by Coleman Parkes, which Fellowes commissioned, looked at SMEs specifically. The results show that more than half of UK SMEs do not have a documented policy in place to ensure the correct disposal of sensitive information and many are, worryingly, unaware or up-to-date with the Data Protection Legislation. Craig Boulter of HSM comments that to protect against identity fraud, "SMEs should really adopt similar practices to those of a larger corporation. Indeed, they are legally bound by the same Data Protection Act." He suggests that staff are trained to be alert and aware of the risks with identity theft. This should include efforts to ensure they are aware that every bit of paper whether it is the

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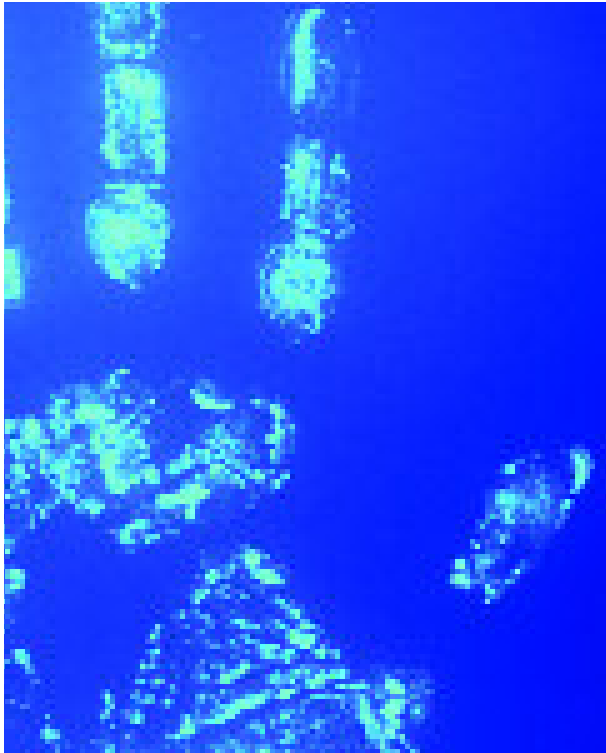
JILL ORGAN, SENIOR CATEGORY MANAGER, REXEL BUSINESS MACHINES

shredder with the correct specs and if you don't understand the different types, ask someone who does. Jill Organ, senior category manager, Rexel Business Machines, says, "With so much choice around, it's helpful to understand exactly what the various options mean, such as shredding capacity, shred width, security level, etc." A quality shredder for everyday use isn't that expensive and the peace of mind it provides will undoubtedly prove priceless. Alexandra Sparks, marketing executive at GBC, recommends that salespeople define user requirements as key information in selling security products and solutions, adding, "There is a need for companies to educate staff in security procedures for confidential waste." Shredders have become the fastest growing category in the office products industry, so make sure you're aware of the different types and can recommend the right one to your customers.



obvious items such as customer letters, statistics, reports etc. "As well as the not so obvious documents such as the post it note with important information."

Of course, some information won't need a shredder, namely the stuff you keep on your desktop, rather than on your desk. In this day and age, cybercrooks can find it easier to access your personal data than regular stripy-jumper wearing cat-burglars. All computer users need to be vigilant in protecting themselves against the loss of data, especially laptop users (since they're a heck of a lot easier to carry off.) The most important protection measure you need to take is to back up your data! Too often, backup is not perceived as a worthwhile for small businesses and, as a result, SMEs are leaving themselves wide open to catastrophe. >>



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TONY STEAD, SAFE INTERNATIONAL

Inform your customers that they need to get into a backing-up routine. And never leave your back up disks locked in an office drawer. You may as well just throw them away!

While technology may cause some minor headaches, it can also be particularly useful. For example, biometric technology is increasingly coming to the fore in the fight to protect what’s yours. George Benn, product manager - Retail, Sony UK, explains, “Biometrics technology is an identification of a person by various physiological characteristics, which cannot be transferred or copied. There is no need to enter a number or use a card.” Which means that there’s no chance that a card can be stolen or a number forgotten.

One of the most common types of Biometrics used today is fingerprint information. The biometric information is captured and translated into a template which is stored for subsequent authentication. Another biometrics system to consider is iris recognition which involves a simple glance into a camera. Identification takes approximately one second. Rob Healey, marketing manager, Panasonic System Solutions, explains that iris recognition, “Obviates the need for ID cards or passwords, providing huge time and cost savings in password maintenance alone.” This may all sound a little 007, but the threat is real, and as the level of security breaches and transaction fraud increases, the need for highly secure identification and personal verification technologies is becoming apparent.

Many sectors are already benefiting from these technologies and it’s only a matter of time before they become more commonplace in smaller companies, so it’s worth mentioning to your clients. ■

SECRETS AND SHREDDERS

Following all the publicity about identity theft, shredders are selling fast – but the key to success is to sell the right one. That’s why Rexel produces a comprehensive guide to shredding called ‘Secrets and Shredders’. Now in its 4th edition, the booklet contains masses of advice on choosing and using a shredder and also brings consumers up to date with issues such as identity theft, corporate fraud and the Data Protection Act.

The booklet has been warmly welcomed by the trade as a valuable sales tool. Flo Turak of Egan Reid says Secrets and Shredders was “the starting point for our own brochure on shredding. People tend to buy the cheapest machine, which is often completely wrong for their needs. The booklet explains really clearly what the customer needs to know, and we used a lot of the information in it.”

Andy Thomas of Dialstat agrees. “The booklet landed on our desks just after a big TV expose on identity theft so we decided to use it as a back up for a special promotion on home and office shredders. The beauty of the booklet is that it covers both home and office security, so everybody can relate to it.”

Dean Lale of Irongate has also been using the booklet to accompany a shredder promotion currently being mailed with all customer orders. “It’s working really well,” he says, “and interestingly some customers have upgraded to a more powerful machine or have bought several for different departments.”

Copies of the booklet are available from your Rexel salesperson or by contacting information@acco.com

