Every important system has two downtime numbers

About 15 minutes, from records you already have

One is how long the business says it can be down. The other is how long IT takes to restore it. If the two differ, an outage is a costly time to find out.

Yes **2** Written down, with a date (a log, a screen, a document), and it meets your own plan.

Partly **1** Remembered, but not written down, or the record shows you missed your plan.

No **0** Nobody knows, or it was never done. A blank is a finding.

"None, checked on a date" counts as a record. No plan or target written down? Write your guess first, then measure: the guess is your plan.

Five questions about your own setup

1 The business's number

Your answer, and where it is written down (with the date) For your most important system, how long did its business owner say it could be down before the business is harmed? Write the hours in their words, with the owner's name and the date.

No 0 | Partly 1 | Yes 2 | Score 0, 1 or 2 | This quarter | Next quarter

How to raise it

Where to find it:
Ask the system's business owner, one conversation, and write the answer down the same day. An existing disaster recovery plan or impact analysis may already hold it. Check it still matches what the owner says today.

To get it to a 2:
A written answer in hours, in the owner's words, with their name and a date. No answer from the owner yet? Write your best guess and mark it as a guess; it counts as 1 until the owner confirms it.

What this does not prove:
The owner's answer is an opinion. It shows what the business expects, not what it could survive.

2 IT's restore time

Your answer, and where it is written down (with the date) How long does IT take to bring that same system back? Write the hours and minutes from the log of your last restore test (bringing the system back from backup to prove it can come back). The target in the plan is the RTO, the recovery time objective.

No 0 | Partly 1 | Yes 2 | Score 0, 1 or 2 | This quarter | Next quarter

How to raise it

Where to find it:
The log of your last restore test in the backup software, or the test ticket. The clock starts when someone starts working on it, not when data starts copying. No test on record? Write your best estimate and mark it as an estimate.

To get it to a 2:
A measured time from a dated log of a restore of this system.

What this does not prove:
One restore test in a quiet hour does not prove the same time on a busy day, or with several systems down at once.

3 The two on one line

Your answer, and where it is written down (with the date) Are the business's number and IT's number written on one line, with the date and who wrote them? Is IT's time inside the business's?

No 0 | Partly 1 | Yes 2 Score 0, 1 or 2 This quarter ☐ Next quarter ☐

> **How to raise it**
>
> **Where to find it:**
> One line on one page is enough: system, the business's hours, IT's hours (from a log or marked as an estimate), date, names. Write it now if it does not exist.
>
> **To get it to a 2:**
> Both numbers on one dated line, and IT's time is the same as or shorter than the business's. If IT's time is longer, the row scores 1 and it is your next step, whatever the total.
>
> **What this does not prove:**
> Matching numbers do not mean a restore would work. They mean nobody is surprised by the answer.

4 How old IT's number is

Your answer, and where it is written down (with the date) What is the date of the restore test IT's number came from, and has anything big changed since (a new version, much more data, a move)?

No 0 | Partly 1 | Yes 2 Score 0, 1 or 2 This quarter ☐ Next quarter ☐

> **How to raise it**
>
> **Where to find it:**
> The date on the restore test log, then your change tickets or release notes for that system since that date.
>
> **To get it to a 2:**
> A test date inside the interval your plan sets, with nothing big changed since. No interval written down? Write your guess (once a year, once a quarter) and score against it.
>
> **What this does not prove:**
> A recent test shows the time as it was on that day. It does not show the time after a later change.

5 The next check

Your answer, and where it is written down (with the date) Is the date to compare the two numbers again on the calendar, with a named person?

No 0 | Partly 1 | Yes 2 Score 0, 1 or 2 This quarter ☐ Next quarter ☐

> **How to raise it**
>
> **Where to find it:**
> Your team calendar or change schedule.
>
> **To get it to a 2:**
> A date on the calendar inside your plan's interval, with a named person.

Your total, out of 10 ☐

9-10 **Known** Score the same page again next quarter.

5-8 **Partly known** Fix your lowest row this week.

0-4 **Assumed** Do row 1 this week.

Two rules beat the total: if row 1 scores below 2, the result is Assumed. Any row that missed your plan or guess is your next step.

Which system would you put on that line first?

What this does not prove

The owner's answer is an opinion, and IT's time is only as good as the restore behind it. Matching numbers do not mean a restore would work. They mean nobody is surprised by the answer.

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