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Cloud, Infrastructure & Management

Minimum Viable Recovery: Closing the Recovery Gap

By Jon Collins

Minimum Viable Recovery: Closing the Recovery Gap

A Proactive, Business-Led Approach

This report explores why more than half of enterprises lack confidence in
their cyber recovery capabilities, despite significant investment. The report
introduces the concept of minimum viable recovery, a business-led
approach that helps reduce risk and cost while increasing confidence.

01 Executive Summary

The 54% Problem: Most Organizations Lack Recovery Confidence

Despite millions of dollars spent on resilience and recovery infrastructure, 54% of enterprises lack confidence in their ability to recover from disruption or attack. This is because recovery planning is often technology-led, rather than business-driven.

In this report, we look at the global state of business recovery from the vantage point of technology leadership in enterprise organizations. From the findings, we see a "recovery gap" between recovery goals and capability.

While business resilience is predicated on technological resilience, infrastructure complexity and constant change undermine enterprise responsiveness to disruption, feeding operational inertia. This means many organizations are unsure how resilient they will be against future business interruptions, despite how much they value recovery readiness.

Drilling into the strategies for business recovery shows that not all organizations can afford a comprehensive approach to cyber or incident recovery. More than half of respondents say they have adopted a staged or tiered approach, which recovers the business in a stepwise fashion. A smaller portion opts for a fast recovery followed by a reduced operational state, fully recovering only later.

While these approaches can help, they are founded on operational rather than business priorities—and they are insufficiently delivering on recovery goals. A more welcome approach, as shown in the research, is to invest upfront to understand business recovery priorities and put the business, rather than technology operations, first.

The Three Pillars of Minimum Viable Recovery

We can call this a business-led, minimum viable recovery approach. From the research, we have identified three pillars:

- **Prioritization based on business criticality:** Identify the minimal set of business functions essential for operation.

- **A measurable, business-led response:** Quantify the value of these functions and map them to supporting systems, services, and interdependencies.

- **Organizational readiness:** Build cyber recovery plans with clear roles and define success criteria so that the business, not just IT, is prepared and aligned.

The Business Value of Minimum Viable Recovery

From the research, we see how organizations that take a business-led, minimum viable recovery approach can achieve the same level of risk mitigation as those pursuing full, comprehensive recovery—but faster, and at lower cost. The caveat is that it requires upfront, proactive business engagement at a strategic level.

For minimum viable recovery to work, organizations must define priorities, align stakeholders, and make decisions based on business impact, not just technical expedience.

02 Quantifying the Recovery Gap

WE DO NOT NEED TO dwell on the scale of disruptive business incidents and ransomware attacks today. As we can see from **Figure 1**, most organizations we surveyed experienced a business-critical incident within the last 18 months, a familiar topic for the business and technology leaders we speak to.
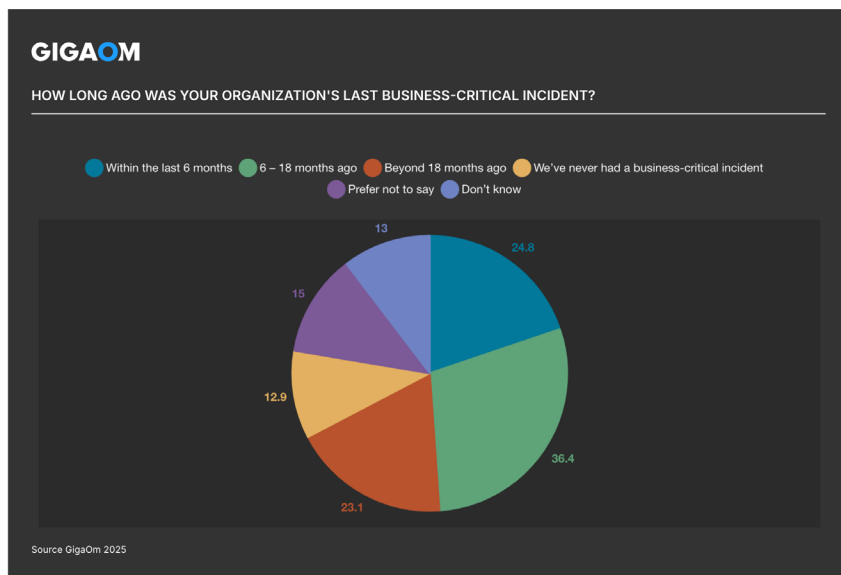

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HOW LONG AGO WAS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S LAST BUSINESS-CRITICAL INCIDENT?

- Within the last 6 months
- 6 – 18 months ago
- Beyond 18 months ago
- We've never had a business-critical incident
- Prefer not to say
- Don't know

24.8
36.4
23.1
12.9
15
13

Source GigaOm 2025

Figure 1. Most organizations have experienced a business-critical incident

"We do not need to dwell on the scale of disruptive business incidents and ransomware attacks today."

The Current Threat Landscape: Cybersecurity Leads the Risk

The main causes of business disruption are technological. **Figure 2** shows cybersecurity threats as the most significant, followed closely by insider attacks, either malicious or inadvertent. Organizations are less concerned about health, weather, and other types of business threats.

Figure 2. The biggest threats are cybersecurity-related

"The main causes of business disruption are technological."

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AFTER A BUSINESS-CRITICAL INCIDENT, HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU THAT YOUR ORGANIZATION COULD RECOVER?

Percentage (y-axis: 0 to 100)

To partial operations   To full business operations

● Very confident ● Somewhat confident ● Unconfident ● Don't know

Source GigaOm 2025

Figure 3. A gap exists between business recovery aspiration and reality

The Recovery Confidence Gap: Only 46% Feel Prepared

Overall, the level of confidence in future recovery after a business-critical incident is very low. From **Figure 3**, we can see that less than half (46%) of organizations are very confident that they could recover to full business operations. We consider the remaining 54% as the "recovery gap" between business recovery aspiration and its reality.

46%

"Less than half of organizations are very confident that they could recover to full business operations [after a business-critical incident]."

Why Current Recovery Plans Fail

The Business-Technology Disconnect

CLEARLY, CURRENT RECOVERY APPROACHES are failing enterprise organizations across the board.

To understand why this gap persists, we can look at how organizations undertake recovery. Options fall between comprehensive approaches (the norm for 44% of organizations, **Figure 4**) and staged or tiered approaches (56%).
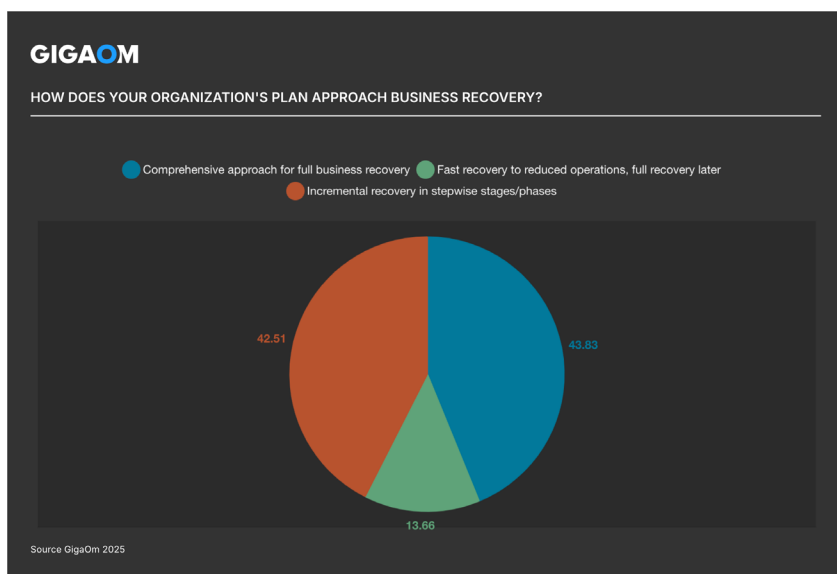

Figure 4. Recovery options are split between comprehensive and staged approaches

In principle, as we see from **Figure 5**, recovery goals are business-led. We can see 56% of organizations prioritize restoring core business capabilities first, followed by 49% that focus on employee access to systems, and 45% on customer impact. While we can see some variation by industry, organizations are prioritizing the business, its staff, and its customers.

The Priorities Paradox: Business Goals vs. Technical Execution

While recovery goals are theoretically business-led (56% prioritize restoring core business capabilities) (**Figure 5**), actual recovery priorities are more technical and operational (security systems at 56%, operations at 45%), with revenue impact much lower (31%) (**Figure 6**). This highlights a fundamental disconnect between business goals and recovery execution.
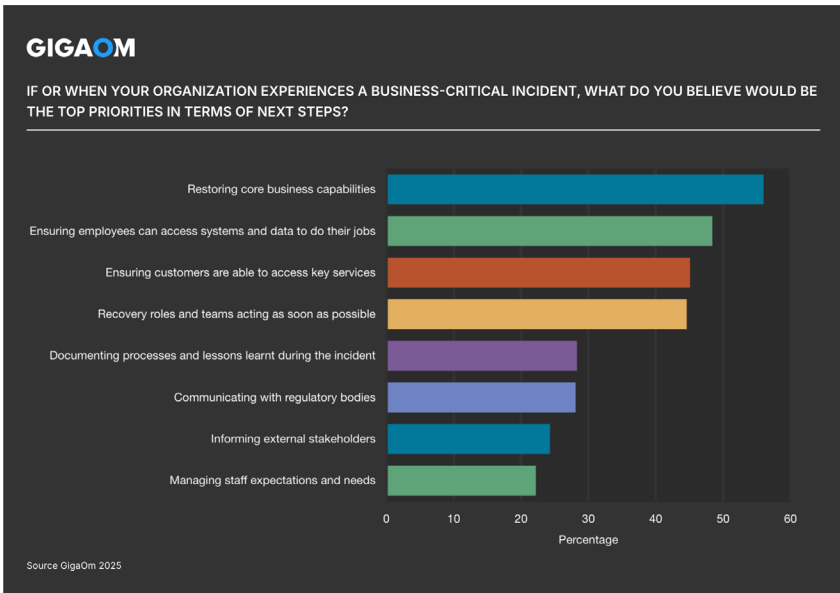

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IF OR WHEN YOUR ORGANIZATION EXPERIENCES A BUSINESS-CRITICAL INCIDENT, WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE WOULD BE THE TOP PRIORITIES IN TERMS OF NEXT STEPS?

Source GigaOm 2025

Figure 5. First priorities in principle are business-related

> **"While recovery goals are theoretically business-led, actual recovery priorities are more technical and operational."**

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WHEN DECIDING WHICH SERVICES TO PRIORITIZE DURING RECOVERY, WHICH FACTORS DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION SEE AS THE MOST IMPORTANT?
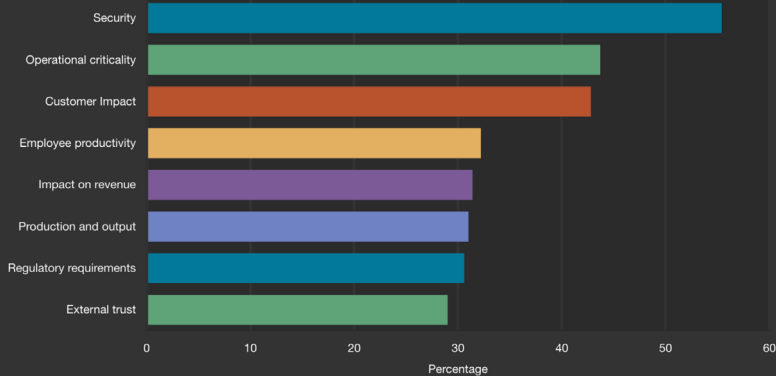
Source GigaOm 2025

Figure 6. Revenue impact comes much lower than security, ops, and customers
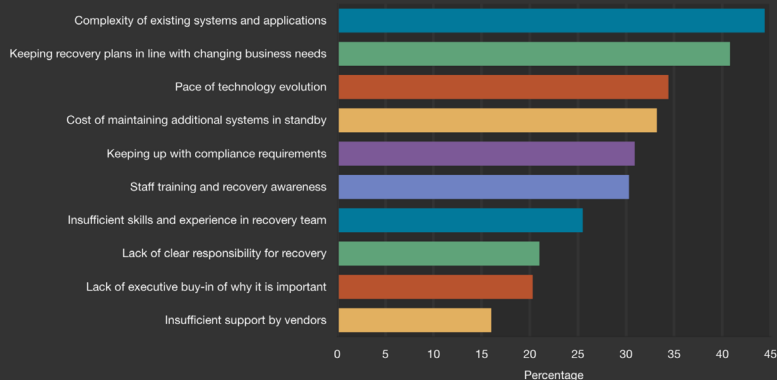
The Most Significant Barriers to Recovery

Why do organizations find themselves compromised from a recovery perspective? **Figure 7** shows how the complexity of existing systems and applications tops the list of recovery challenges, followed by the difficulties in keeping recovery plans aligned with a changing business environment, and then the pace of technical change.

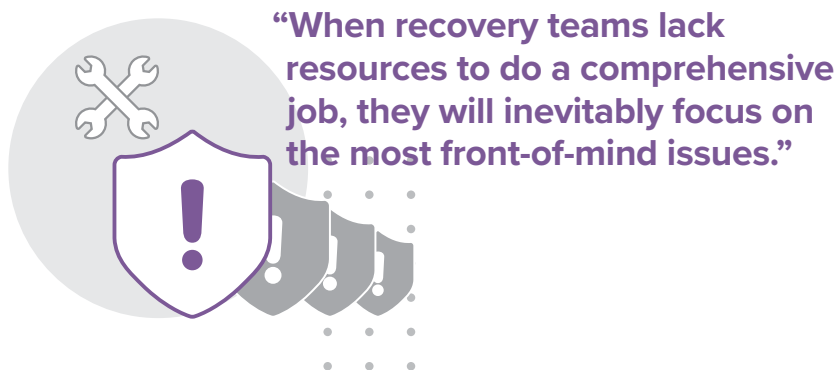**"The complexity of existing systems and applications tops the list of recovery challenges."**

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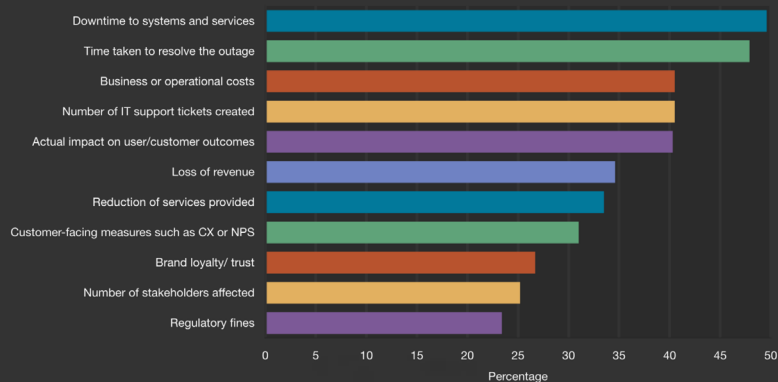**WHAT DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION SEE AS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES TO BUSINESS RECOVERY?**

Complexity of existing systems and applications
Keeping recovery plans in line with changing business needs
Pace of technology evolution
Cost of maintaining additional systems in standby
Keeping up with compliance requirements
Staff training and recovery awareness
Insufficient skills and experience in recovery team
Lack of clear responsibility for recovery
Lack of executive buy-in of why it is important
Insufficient support by vendors

Percentage

Source GigaOm 2025

Figure 7. Complexity, business needs, and technology change are the greatest challenges

These challenges are fundamental and compelling. While operations teams want to do the best possible job for their organizations, they are being forced into coping strategies. When recovery teams lack resources to do a comprehensive job, they will inevitably focus on the most front-of-mind issues, which are more technical.

> **"When recovery teams lack resources to do a comprehensive job, they will inevitably focus on the most front-of-mind issues."**
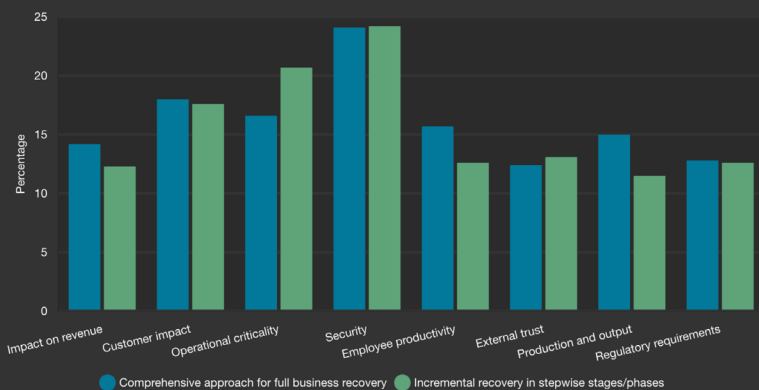
Figure 8. Revenue impact comes much lower than security, ops, and customers

Technical Metrics Dominate Recovery Planning

To reinforce this point, system downtime and time to resolution are seen as the most important measures in general outage terms (at 50% and 49% respectively, from **Figure 8**), and customer or revenue impact are significantly less prioritized. In the absence of business prioritization, technology teams are focusing on technical measures.

Given these clear and present technical pressures, technology teams are focusing on technical measures. As with all KPIs, the measures we adopt have the most influence on our behaviors, which is why business priorities should be at the heart of recoverability.

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WHEN DECIDING WHICH SERVICES TO PRIORITIZE DURING RECOVERY, WHICH FACTORS ARE MOST IMPORTANT?
Compare: How does your organization's plan approach business recovery?

Source GigaOm 2025

Figure 9. A comprehensive recovery approach aligns with business priorities

In our survey, organizations that take a comprehensive approach are more likely to prioritize business rather than technical factors. Whilst security comes first in both cases, those following a comprehensive approach lead with customer impact rather than operational criticality, followed by revenue and productivity impact (**Figure 9**).

So, how can organizations that lack the budget for a comprehensive approach still gain its benefits? Enter minimum viable recovery.

04 Strong Business Support for Minimum Viable Recovery

96% Endorse the Approach

IN THE RESEARCH, WE LOOKED TO determine whether a cyber recovery approach based on business outcomes rather than technical measures might be viewed as more effective than current practice. We termed this approach "minimum viable recovery," reflecting industry thinking on the topic. Sure enough, we found that organizations generally supported the minimum viable recovery idea and recognized its value. In our polling, 96% of respondents said their organizations should prioritize this approach (**Figure 10**).
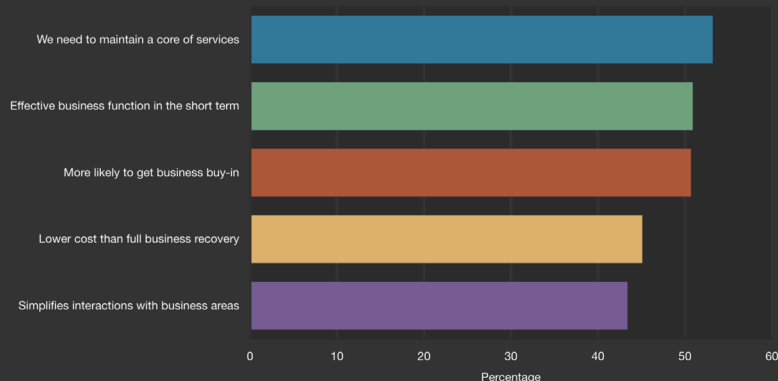
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HOW MUCH DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR ORGANIZATION SHOULD PRIORITIZE THE MINIMUM VIABILITY APPROACH?

- To a great extent
- To some extent
- Not at all
- Don't know

1.7 1.7

42.8

53.8

Source GigaOm 2025

Figure 10. Organizations recognize the value of the minimum viability approach

WHAT BENEFITS HAVE YOU GAINED/DO YOU EXPECT YOUR ORGANIZATION TO GAIN FROM IMPLEMENTING A MINIMUM VIABILITY APPROACH?
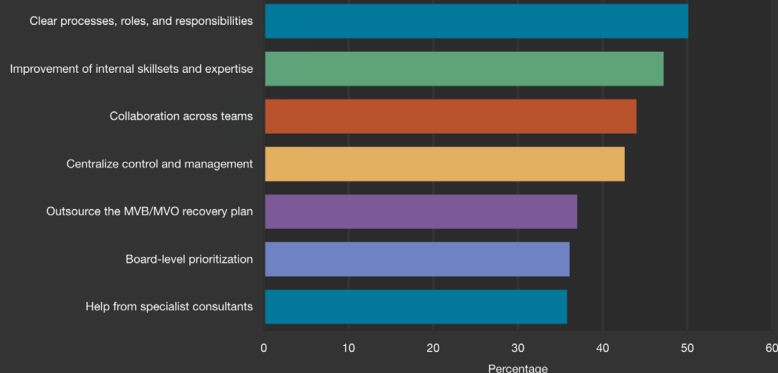
Figure 11. Services, business effectiveness, and collaboration lead the rationale

When asked why minimum viable recovery was appropriate, the three most important responses balanced the technical, business, and practical needs of recovery. From a technical standpoint, respondents recognized the need to maintain a core of services, while also prioritizing the effectiveness of the business. They also recognized the importance of getting business buy-in to the recovery approach (**Figure 11**). These principles become the core success criteria.

Figure 12. Clear processes, roles, and responsibilities are required for delivery

Critical Success Factors for Minimum Viable Recovery Implementation

We can learn additional success factors from the research, as we can see in **Figure 12**. When we asked what is important for delivery of minimum viability best practice, respondents highlighted people and process aspects as the highest priority. Half (51%) of the overall sample expressed a need for clear processes, roles, and responsibilities to deliver on the approach. Second, at 46%, was the need to improve skill sets and expertise.

These findings suggest the need for a minimum viability implementation model that leads with the business, while being both technical and measurable in delivery. This differentiates strongly from the more technically led, staged recovery, which cannot deliver on its goals if it takes place in isolation from business needs.

05 Minimum Viable Recovery vs. Comprehensive Recovery

Equally Effective, More Efficient

HAVING ESTABLISHED THE PRINCIPLES behind minimum viable recovery, the next question is: How effective is the approach compared to others?

The findings demonstrate similar effectiveness between minimum viability and a comprehensive approach, but with lower costs for minimum viable recovery. Ninety-two percent of comprehensive approach adopters feel they can recover to minimum viability in under a week, which aligns with the confidence of strong minimum viability advocates; 37% and 36% respectively feel they can recover to minimum viability in less than a day. **(Figures 13 and 14.)**
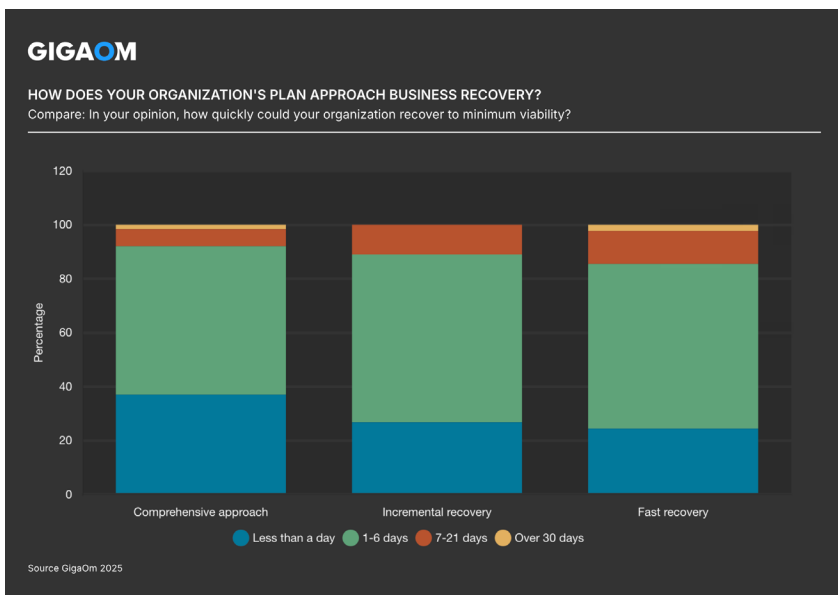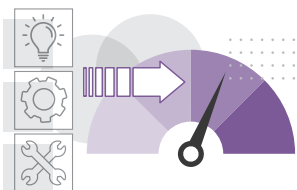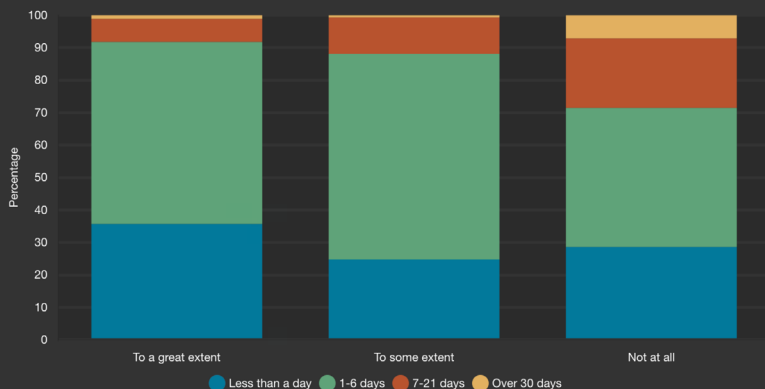

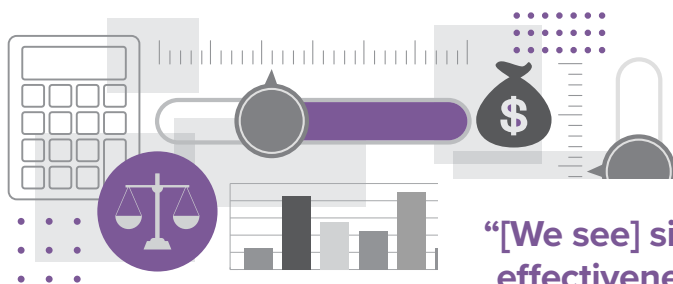Figure 13. How does your organization's plan approach business recovery?

"How effective is the [minimum viability] approach compared to others?"

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TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR ORGANIZATION SHOULD PRIORITIZE THE MINIMAL VIABILITY APPROACH?
Compare: In your opinion, how quickly could your organization recover to minimum viability?

Legend: ● Less than a day ● 1-6 days ● 7-21 days ● Over 30 days

Source GigaOm 2025

Figure 14. To what extent do you believe your organization should prioritize the minimal viability approach?

"[We see] similar effectiveness between minimum viability and a comprehensive approach, but with lower costs for minimum viable recovery."

HOW DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PLAN APPROACH BUSINESS RECOVERY?
Compare: Overall, how valuable do you consider the concepts behind minimum viability?

Figure 15. Minimum viability is of high value to adopters of the comprehensive approach

We can gain further insight from the comprehensive recovery group and how it perceives the role of minimum viability. As **Figure 15** shows, while the incremental/fast groups see less value in the approach, organizations with a comprehensive recovery approach are particularly keen and spending the most money. These outfits have the broadest view and (as we have seen) the most business focus.

> **"Organizations with a comprehensive recovery approach are particularly keen and spending the most money."**

The Three-Pillar Minimum Viable Recovery Framework

Minimum viable recovery offers a more solid foundation than technically led staged recovery and will be more cost-effective than comprehensive recovery. However, this requires direct, proactive business engagement from the outset. Based on the findings in the previous section, we propose the following pillars as a starting point for success (**Figure 16**):

- **Business-critical prioritization:** Identify and quantify essential business functions, mapping these to technical dependencies.

- **Measurable technical response:** Create automatable recovery workflows, focused on positive business impact.

- **Organizational recovery readiness:** Address skill gaps, governance, and decision-making capabilities, mitigating recovery risks.

These pillars can be used as the basis for assessment, strategy, planning, and then continuous improvement of an organization's recovery posture. They set recoverability as a strategic, proactive part of business as usual for both technical departments and business leadership.
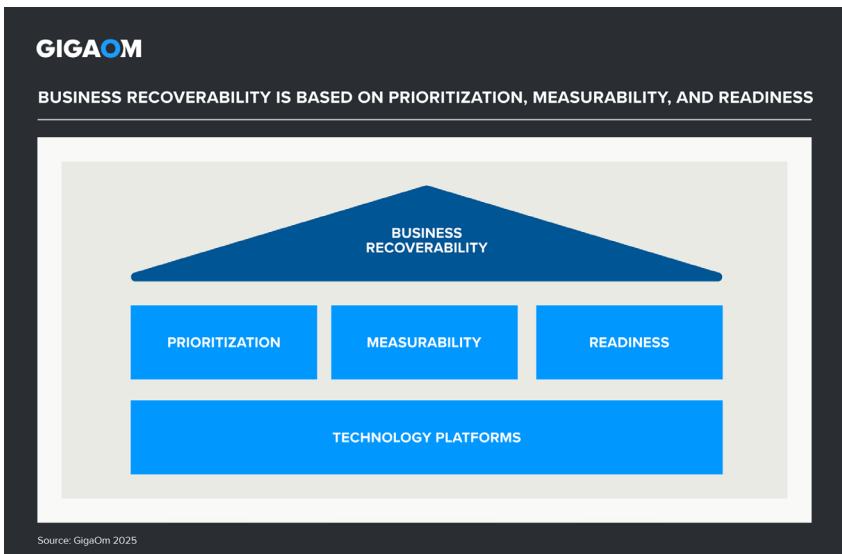

Figure 16. Business recoverability is based on prioritization, measurability, and readiness

Seven Practical Steps to Implement Minimum Viable Recovery

When ransomware attacks are almost inevitable, to take forward minimum viability in practical terms, we would recommend the following to technical leadership:

1. Start with business measures instead of technical recovery metrics

2. Engage directly with the business with clear terms of engagement

3. Have the right people drive the process with clear roles and responsibilities

4. Map business recovery objectives to systems and effort

5. Build out organizational readiness with defined roles and workflows

6. Set board-level success criteria to show the gap between current and planned objectives

7. Drive recoverability success via automation with business priorities in place

Bridging the recovery gap means shifting from technically oriented strategies to a business impact-led, measurement-backed approach. Minimum viability offers both a strategic milestone and a practical goal.

06 Conclusion

IN SUMMARY, STAGED APPROACHES HAVE THEIR PLACE, but recovery from ransomware and other incidents needs to be a business-led initiative based on impact. Minimum viable recovery involves integrating business recoverability into strategy and decision-making, aligning technical recovery plans with business objectives, enabling execution capability and continuous monitoring.

By considering recovery as a business-led, measurable, and organization-wide capability based on prioritization, technical leaders can reduce cost and complexity while increasing confidence and resilience across the board. A proactive, minimum viable approach—through clear governance, defined accountability, and continuous validation—enables decisive action rather than uncertain reaction.

Minimum viable recovery isn't just a cost-effective alternative—it's a strategic imperative. For organizations looking to close the recovery gap, the path forward starts with business alignment, measurable outcomes, and cultural readiness. As a first step, board-level executives need to proactively decide whether they want to put business recovery first or go with hope as a strategy.

By putting cyber resilience and recoverability at the heart of the business, IT and business leaders can turn resilience into a competitive advantage, proactively and sustainably preparing for incidents in a way that responds to both the complexity of the enterprise environment and the changing nature of business. Business leaders cannot afford to risk their organizations on chance, and with minimum viable recovery, they don't have to.

07 | Annex

GIGAOM SURVEYS SERVE TO TEST HYPOTHESES about a given topic area. In this survey we looked to explore how enterprise organizations are approaching recovery, and the barriers and enablers that impact success.

One thousand senior decision makers responded to the survey, directly involved in defining, buying, or using application acceleration solutions. Respondents came from a cross-section of industries without limitation, from companies with 1,000-plus employees across the globe.
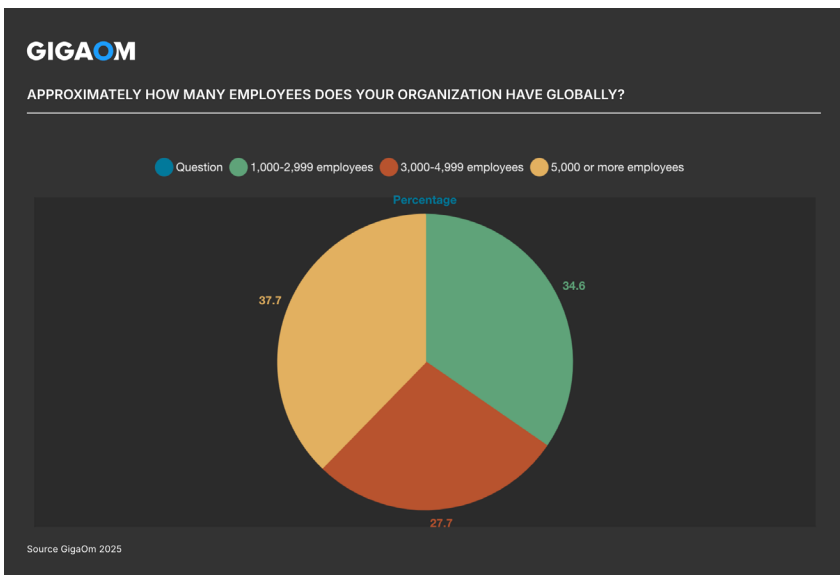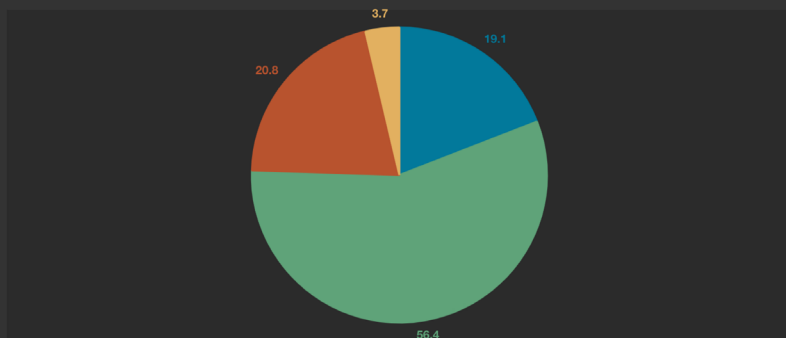

Figure 17. Approximately how many employees does your organization have globally?

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WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR POSITION IN THE ORGANIZATION?

● Board member: C-level   ● Senior management   ● Mid-level management   ● Junior management

3.7
20.8
19.1
56.4

Source GigaOm 2025

Figure 18. Which of these best describes your position in the organization?

08 About

Commvault is the gold standard in cyber resilience, helping more than 100,000 organizations keep data safe and businesses resilient and moving forward. Today, Commvault offers the only cyber resilience platform that combines the best data security and rapid recovery at enterprise scale across any workload, anywhere—at the lowest TCO.

Commvault

About Jon Collins

Jon Collins has over 35 years of experience in IT. He has worked as an industry analyst for a number of years and has advised some of the world's largest technology companies, including Cisco, EMC, IBM, and Microsoft in product and go-to-market strategy. He has acted as an agile software consultant to a variety of enterprise organizations, advised government departments on IT security and network management, led the development of a mobile healthcare app, and successfully managed a rapidly expanding enterprise IT environment. Jon is frequently called on to offer direct and practical advice to support IT and digital transformation initiatives, has served on the editorial board for the BearingPoint Institute thought leadership program, and is currently a columnist for IDG Connect.

Jon wrote the British Computer Society's handbook for security architects and co-authored The Technology Garden, a book offering CIOs clear advice on the principles of sustainable IT delivery.

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MINIMUM VIABLE RECOVERY