

BUSINESS CONTINUITY & Risk Management

MAKING SURE THAT TODAY'S BUSINESS CONTINUES TOMORROW JULY 26 2006



PANEL OF EXPERTS
The nation's top business continuity specialists give their views on the future of contingency planning p12



THE NEW STANDARD
Lyndon Bird, technical director at the Business Continuity Institute looks at business continuity standards p23



THE WEAKEST LINKS
Management of the supply chain is a critical issue, writes the Association of Insurance and Risk Managers p11



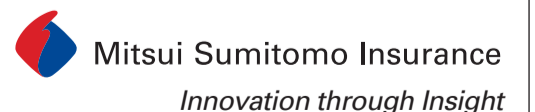
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
The art and science of business continuity management and risk management explained p3



On November 17th 2005, we set fire to our client's factory. It's all part of the service.



For details, and the vital lessons learned from this live Business Continuity exercise, see page 4, or visit www.msilm.com/bcp



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Shouldn't they know better?

A survey by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, shows only 48 per cent of technology, media and telecoms companies have a full business continuity plan. By contrast some 88 per cent of banks and financial service companies where have a full business continuity plan.

Oddly enough while technology and telecoms companies should theoretically be in the lead in this field – many of which implement business continuity plans for their customers – they are also laggards in security.

The survey showed these firms don't provide adequate resources and funding for security – despite the fact that more than half had breaches in the past 12 months.

Small is still beautiful (but riskier too)

Small and medium-sized enterprises tend to get ignored when talking about business continuity planning. The planning is more prosaic. The challenges are fewer. And most importantly, their budgets are smaller.

BY MICHAEL HALLS



John Watts, a director at Oppello

“But of course, the same principles that apply to large businesses also apply to the small ones,” says John Watts, a director at Oppello, an IT consultancy that specialises in looking after small to medium sized businesses. “And business continuity planning is a must for companies of all sizes. A small firm that loses all its data will go out of business, just as surely as a larger one.”

“If anything smaller firms become more vulnerable to crises because larger companies are geographically more diverse – knocking out your operations in say Edinburgh is not as business critical when your offices in London can take some of the overload.”

A few years ago business continuity planning was only regularly undertaken by the larger corporations, nowadays SMEs are more than likely to make some kind of preparation.

Part of the problem, however, is that smaller companies are typically less aware of the correct procedures than larger firms where systems have been developed.

Initial IT audit

“Frequently we’ll find small companies that have thought about continuity issues but not implemented them fully,” says Watts.

“On our initial audit we’ll find, for example, that IT back-ups have indeed been taken. But the tapes are sitting next to the computer and the coffee cups! It’s frightening too the number of times you find that checking the tapes has not gone on – the procedures have never been tested.”

Increasing sophistication

But with the growing awareness of the need for business continuity, smaller firms are starting to get more sophisticated and this kind of situation should soon start to become less and less frequent.

Also one encouraging trend for smaller firms looking for business continuity support is that there are a greater number of support firms operating in this space and charging a price that is afford-

able. And size can sometimes be an advantage too. Large companies are often entrenched in old technologies and methodologies. One advantage that smaller companies have over larger companies is that they are able to respond and embrace new technologies more quickly

Depending on the size of a business, support for business continuity planning can be brought in-house. Typically, a company with around 30 computers and a couple of servers could keep an IT specialist – as a full member of staff – busy for most of a week.

Other potential weaknesses

However, that can cause problems too. IT specialists are valuable commodities and tend to move around considerably. Also there remains the constant questions over how the company ensures that the business runs as normal when the IT expert is on holiday or sick.

“The great thing about business continuity,” says Lyndon Bird, technical director of the BCI, “is that – irrespective of the size of your business – you can go a long way to devising a plan simply by getting your senior staff to think through the issues.”

Up to 75 per cent of your company's data 'lives' outside the data centre

Your data is backed up and you tested the BC contingency plans for the recovery of your data centre a couple of years ago. So, is your data safe? Maybe!

The volume of data located in regional office locations has exploded. File servers, email servers, and corporate applications are running on servers hundreds of miles away from the security of your data centre.

As a consequence, most companies are no longer able to guarantee the security, recoverability or compliance of up to 75 per cent of their corporate data assets. So, given the choice, with so much business information in a vulnerable position, where would you choose to put that data? The answer every time is in the data centre. It's the central hub where you already have in place the management processes and disciplines to best protect your company's data.

Many companies are now urgently implementing a 'move it to the centre' strategy to eliminate the risk which remote data poses.

But centralising this data requires the right infrastructure, together with careful planning and execution in order to maintain application performance, while improving data access and protection.

For over 20 years, McDATA has been consolidating, optimising and protecting data assets, providing BCDR solutions, remote data access and safeguarding the integrity of geographically dispersed data assets.

For more information please visit www.mcdata.com/info/bc

CUT BIG IT PROBLEMS DOWN TO SIZE

At Oppello, we specialise in providing large company IT support - including business continuity planning - to growing companies. So now you can have a disaster plan that's more than crossing your fingers and hoping for the best.

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