

Revitalizing Business Continuity

In IT, complexity grows over time. When companies adopt a new enterprise technology, it always affects their processes and workflow – often causing “messes” and “clutter” that need to be cleaned up. That’s an essential task in any production environment and it never ends. Growing complexity has to be managed by your team and that management takes time, resources, personnel, and energy.

But keeping the lights on matters just as much. It’s easy to devote all your resources to managing production complexity, but all those changes break your business continuity (BC) plan. Without an up-to-date plan, you run the risk of downtime and disaster.

So how do you revitalize your business continuity plan? How do you keep it fresh? How do you keep your plan up to date in the face of complexity, constant change and limited resources?

1

First step: Assessment

The first step is to take a good look at what you’ve got. You need to examine the plans and procedures in your BC program:

- Are they actionable within your organization?
- Has the data (i.e., employee records, contact information, RTOs for critical components within your organization) been updated recently?
- Do they rely on documents or standard operating procedures (SOPs) within your database that are outdated?

In other words “garbage in, garbage out.” If you have junk cluttering up your business continuity program, your disaster recovery and continuity plans are not going to work.

2

Second step: Streamlining

The next step is deciding what to keep. Many companies use their BC planning application as a data repository for everything. That might sound good in theory, having everything you need in one place.

The problem is that much of the data actually exists in two places: in the day-to-day working environment, and in the BC program. People often forget to translate changes in the day-to-day environment to the BC program, with the result that the BC data quickly becomes out of date...and nobody even knows it.

There’s a workable solution to this problem. If something isn’t essential to the BC program, don’t house it in the BC plan. Essential items include:

- Core plans
- Critical application recovery procedures
- Location-based BC plans
- Incident response plans

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Instead of *including* other information, just point to it. Point to data that exists in the day-to-day work environment (e.g., operating procedures). After all, most of this information is virtual and always changing – so leverage that fact. Pointing to data rather than copying it streamlines your business continuity program and ensures the validity of the information it draws on in the event of a disaster.



3

Third step: Improvement

Once the first two steps are completed, you can determine if there's an opportunity for improvement. You've looked at what's there, thrown out what's not necessary; now look at what's left.

After all, your company, procedures, risks, assets, etc., have probably changed since the last time you took a good look at your business continuity program. Ask yourself, "What can we do better?" You may want to consolidate key reports, leverage real-time data opportunities, or improve your disaster recovery strategy and procedures.

4

Final step: Inclusion

Finally, it's time to make room for the new – after all, that's a primary reason for cleaning things out in the first place. You'll want to ensure that new applications and processes are captured in your BC plans.

Make sure you cast your net fairly wide; sometimes things that don't seem critical on the surface might well be. In fact, a recent DRJ survey revealed that organizations today rate 36% of applications as business critical – a significant increase over the past 2 years.¹ A rise of employee-sourced apps and SaaS applications is driving this.

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Conclusion:

Coping with massive complexity

Sometimes problems are just too big for one person or team. If you need help cleaning up your BC program, be sure to call in reinforcements – before a disaster or business interruption occurs.

Sungard Availability Services can help you:

- Remove the barriers to organization-wide engagement
- Build greater confidence in contingency plans
- Extend beyond simply addressing compliance requirements
- Empower team preparation, so they recognize threats to the business
- Enable local engagements before incidents lead to major disruptions

Plans and testing don't deliver outcomes, people do, and Sungard AS works with your team to ensure success. Sungard AS Assurance^{CM} enables you to take our guidance and experience back into the business continuity/disaster recovery planning cycle and share it companywide for better outcomes.

Designed by users, for users, this next-generation **business continuity software** and **risk management solution** removes the barriers to organization-wide engagement and builds greater confidence in contingency plans.

For more information

For more information, please visit us on the web at www.sungardas.com/software

¹ DRJ and Forrester BC/DR Market Study: The State of DR Preparedness, Rachel Dines, Senior Analyst, March 2014.

About Sungard Availability Services

Sungard Availability Services provides disaster recovery services, managed IT services, information availability consulting services and business continuity management software.

To learn more, visit www.sungardas.com or call 1-888-270-3657

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