



Disaster planning pays off for four companies

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Executive Summary

See how four businesses with disaster recovery plans in place survived worst-case scenarios, from Hurricane Katrina to September 11 to a tornado with 200 mile-per-hour winds.

Advanced planning helps Procter & Gamble weather the storm

Procter & Gamble's disaster recovery and business continuity plans are textbook perfect. Regular backups, redundant telecommunications infrastructures, off-site data storage and employee phone trees. But even the best-laid plans can't prepare you fully for a disaster on the scope of Hurricane Katrina. In August 2005, Katrina put P&G's disaster preparations to the ultimate test.

"People weren't allowed back into the neighborhoods, so we had trouble getting in to assess the sites," says P&G external relations manager Lars Atorf. "We didn't have power. We didn't have phones. We had to start like we were in the eighteenth century."

With the help of a supplier, P&G flew in a satellite phone system to communicate with customers, partners and emergency officials. "We have to rely on strong working relationships with our external business partners," says Damon Frost, Coffee Category, Global Business Services Leader at P&G.

"Our ability to respond to a disaster like Katrina is the result of a lot of hard-working people. We had all hands on deck to recover, so we didn't have to do the heavy lifting alone." The company was also able to reroute calls from its four Folgers coffee facilities in New Orleans to P&G headquarters in Cincinnati. Backup systems did their job. Previous disaster drills ensured that employees knew what to do.

The result? When many New Orleans businesses shut down for months — or for good — Procter & Gamble facilities were up and running again in late September, the first manufacturing company to come back from the hurricane. Facilities were fully operational by November.

Take a holistic view of disaster recovery. Focus on the business and systems rather than the type of event. Proactive, holistic plans can cover your business through almost any unexpected event.

Morgan Stanley gets a second chance

They say lightning never strikes twice, but sometimes it does. In 1993, the World Trade Center bombing showed financial services giant Morgan Stanley that its disaster preparedness plan needed a serious makeover. It had taken the company four hours to evacuate employees from the World Trade Center offices, some of them walking down 60 or more flights of stairs. In response, Morgan Stanley not only developed a multifaceted disaster plan, but also practiced it frequently.

On September 11, 2001, Morgan Stanley once again evacuated 3800 employees from buildings 2 and 5 of the complex. This time, it took just 45 minutes. Morgan Stanley lost 13 people that day, but might have lost many more without a solid disaster plan, frequently practiced and revisited.

Don't forget your most important asset, your people. Develop a solid evacuation plan for employees. Train them in disaster preparedness and hold regular drills. Morgan Stanley also offered grief counseling after the September 11 tragedy and provided effective, timely communication to keep management and employees informed.

Aeneas Telephone and Internet comes back from a devastating tornado

With winds up to 200 miles per hour, an F4 tornado blew away more than \$1 million in hardware and software belonging to Aeneas Telephone and Internet of Jackson, Tennessee. The company's home office was also reduced to rubble by the May 4, 2003 storm.

"There was nothing left of our building. Just piles of bricks and concrete. We lost everything," says Aeneas Internet and Telephone CEO Jonathan Harlan. But with backup and remote access systems in place, Aeneas was back in business 72 hours later. Some phone customers never lost service. "Because we were ready, our customers never knew the difference."

Be flexible. If you have reliable backup and remote access, you can run your business from anywhere for a short time.

A New Orleans Web provider keeps employees and customers connected post-Katrina

When Hurricane Katrina hit, Compucast Interactive, an Internet service provider, had two challenges: to recover its own physical business and internal communications and to get service back up to more than 250 New Orleans businesses as soon as possible. A proactive emergency plan helped the company succeed on both counts.

Prior to Katrina, Compucast secured dedicated servers outside of New Orleans, one in San Francisco and another in Philadelphia. "With the business now located in two cities on opposite sides of the country, we were confident all Web sites would continue to function if a hurricane were to hit New Orleans," says Judy Weitz, owner of Compucast.

Before the hurricane hit, Weitz evacuated to a hotel room in Houston with her family and vital computer equipment. From her temporary "office," she was able to reach clients and help them reach employees and relatives scattered across the United States by the storm.

"All e-mail addresses remained fully functional for all our clients, which was so important during that critical time," says Weitz. As one of only a few local Web site providers still online, Compucast also served as a communications hub for rescue workers and the media to assist in rebuilding.

Weitz is already preparing for next time. "We will be even more prepared, as we have replaced all of our desktop computers with laptops," she says. "We will now have room in the same car for our family and pets and our customers' lifeline communication resources."

Check your lines of communication. Make sure that your Internet and telephone providers have their own backup and disaster plans in place. Think about how you'll communicate both internally, with employees, and externally, with outside contacts.

Where do you go from here?

CDW can be your business continuity expert, with everything you need to implement a rock-solid backup and archiving plan. To learn more, contact your CDW account manager, and if you don't already have an account manager call (800) 985-4239 today.