

## **DR Planning for your telecoms environment, by Andrew Skipsey, Managing Director M12 Solutions**

**Don't belong to the majority ... be in the minority and properly plan for the unexpected eventualities, which could include:**

**Flood**

**Fire**

**Access denied**

**Lan / Wan Attack**

**Network Supplier failure**

**Transport disruption**

**Power disruption**

### **Introduction**

**This guide has been produced to provide a useful check list and reference for most SME type businesses. It is likely that there will be other items not covered in this document as each organisation has its own unique priorities and characteristics.**

**We all know that prevention is better than cure and that being prepared gives peace of mind, to the stakeholders and staff as well as customers and suppliers.**

**Gold plated levels of contingency might be appropriate for mission critical firms. Near gold plated at a fraction of the cost is available to all.**

**Telecommunications areas to consider include:**

- 1. Power back up, this should cover your system for at least 4 hours of stand by power to allow your people to talk to callers and for the remainder of a working day to continue - in power down mode. There are usually many calls to make when the power is off . Remember to back up your ISDN, your Power over Ethernet and any business critical applications. Also when sizing the back up, take into account your anticipated growth and also the fact that over years the batteries will degrade.**
- 2. You should have a process of backing up the telephone system configuration in case of a major failure or lightning strike etc. The same**

goes for any applications which reside alongside the system such as call management, CTI and Contact Centre Applications. Your maintainer may well charge for a re-installation if you don't have a reasonably up to date back up.

3. Regarding power, it makes sense to install protection against lightning damage with appropriate surge protection and by fusing any external cable runs.
4. It is worth confirming that your system maintainer has the capability to install an emergency phone system within 48 hours notice should there ever be such a need.

**Network Services areas to consider include:**

1. Advertise calls to major departments (e.g accounts, sales, customer service etc) via appropriate non-geographic numbers, e.g. 0844 and work with a provider who can move your calls to a back up location within 30 minutes notice.
2. Work with an ISDN provider who can divert DDI numbers as well as the main number to an alternative disposition in case of failure of the ISDN circuit.
3. Install a second ISDN circuit from a different provider which terminates into the building via a different geographic route to reduce the risks of something physical failing from the exchange.
4. Install a Voice over IP alternative route for calls which can route calls via your data / internet access, both incoming and outgoing calls (at lower prices) can route this way with a quality service as well.
5. Install a second DSL line to act as a back up to your primary internet access.

**Datacomms Areas to consider include:**

1. Have a secure location for your daily data back up to reside on site and your weekly and monthly back up to be securely available off site.
2. Have a server and application environment spreadsheet maintained and up to date which encompasses all of your owned licensing, support agreements and hardware inventory, with contact information – and locate this securely, so that if the worst was to happen in a disaster the IT team can rebuild and replicate quickly.
3. Install a UPS to provide managed shutdown of your servers in the event of power failure.

## **Building in resilience**

- 1. Have some key individuals set up as home workers for voice via Voice over IP and Data via VPN access so that if they are unable to travel they are able to act as if they are in the office.**
- 2. Ensure users know how to transfer calls to voice mail and to mobiles, sounds basic but test your workforce!**
- 3. Have your intranet hosted off site so that in the event of a major failure your staff can see via the internet what your instructions are and you can work as a virtual business in the first place.**
- 4. Ask your suppliers and main customers for their opinions regarding your DR plans, you may find they can give you some useful inclusions after all they would be taking the brunt of the impact of turmoil in your business.**

**If there are areas which you feel should be covered in this document please let us know and we will build in advice and information which is founded on your experience.**