

ROLAND SCHORR & TOWER

A PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANCY

Disaster Recovery

Disaster Recovery is all about getting your business back on-line after some sort of catastrophic event. The event can be something as grandiose as a natural disaster or other major event that causes you to lose access to your normal resources or place of business or more commonly it can be as small-scale as simply having a critical piece of hardware fail and take down a mission-critical server.

Planning

The first, and most often overlooked, step in Disaster Recovery is planning. Three steps for effective Disaster Recovery Planning:

1. Inventory. Understand what you have and where you have it. Be detailed – if you have to call a vendor and order a new one make sure you're ready to answer their questions.
2. Categorize. What's mission-critical? What's important? What's useful? What can we do without?
3. Action items. "X is mission-critical. If we lose x what do we do to get that functionality back?"

Go over your plan with all key personnel. Write it down. Let somebody who didn't write the plan read it and ask questions. In a Disaster Recovery scenario you can't always predict who will end up having to carry out the plan, so make sure the plan makes sense to everybody.

Backups

Make sure you have a good, and not too old, copy of your backups off-site. In case the disaster you're recovering from destroys your physical facility it will destroy your on-site backups too. If you're still using tape for backups make sure to replace those tapes every 18 months or so.

Testing

If you haven't tested your plan, then you haven't planned. Pick a system, service or resource and pull the plug on it for a day. Execute your plan for getting that element of your business back on-line quickly and see what you learn.

Got questions or want more information? Call Ben at (808) 782-6306 or e-mail him at bens@rolandschorr.com.

Mission Critical

It's important to define the terms that you use when categorizing your resources. "Mission Critical" is one of the most oft over-used phrases. We say something is "mission critical" when we cannot conduct an essential business function without it. This will mean different things to different businesses. The coffee-maker is not mission critical...unless you happen to be a Starbucks. If you're a law firm your document server is mission-critical. If you're an architect your CAD software is mission-critical.