

## How Prepared Is Your Firm: *Making Sure Disaster Plans Aren't Disasters*

It's like practicing a fire drill and discovering that the fire alarm does not work. Hurricanes like Ike, power outages, and natural disasters are not the only problems. Fires, hacker attacks and criminal activity also have the potential to cause irreparable damage to your business not to mention the loss of employee productivity and wasted management time.

Follow-through is crucial to success in business continuity. Plan and test the plan. Then re-test periodically. That will highlight any gaps as well as ensure employees and managers are familiar with recovery steps.

If your business is like most, data and employee productivity is paramount. In fact, disasters such as corrupted databases, malicious viruses and tornadoes can trigger prolonged system downtime or catastrophic data loss — and even force your business to close permanently.

**The purpose of business continuity is to maintain service levels while restoring the organization to business as usual.**

Everyone needs business continuity to prevent data loss from:

- ✓ Bond rating change
- ✓ Communications failure (Internet)
- ✓ Competition
- ✓ Customer failure (Sub-prime, K-mart)
- ✓ Drought
- ✓ Electrical failure
- ✓ Epidemic
- ✓ Espionage
- ✓ Fire
- ✓ Flood
- ✓ Hackers
- ✓ Heat
- ✓ Hurricane
- ✓ Ice
- ✓ Inflation
- ✓ Legal action
- ✓ Recession
- ✓ Regulatory agencies
- ✓ Reputation
- ✓ Snow
- ✓ State law
- ✓ Terrorist attack
- ✓ Tornado
- ✓ Traffic
- ✓ Travel accidents
- ✓ Wildfire

Risks are based on a) probability of occurrence and b) impact on the organization.

**Business Continuity is proactive risk mitigation. Disaster Recovery is reactive.**

What to protect:

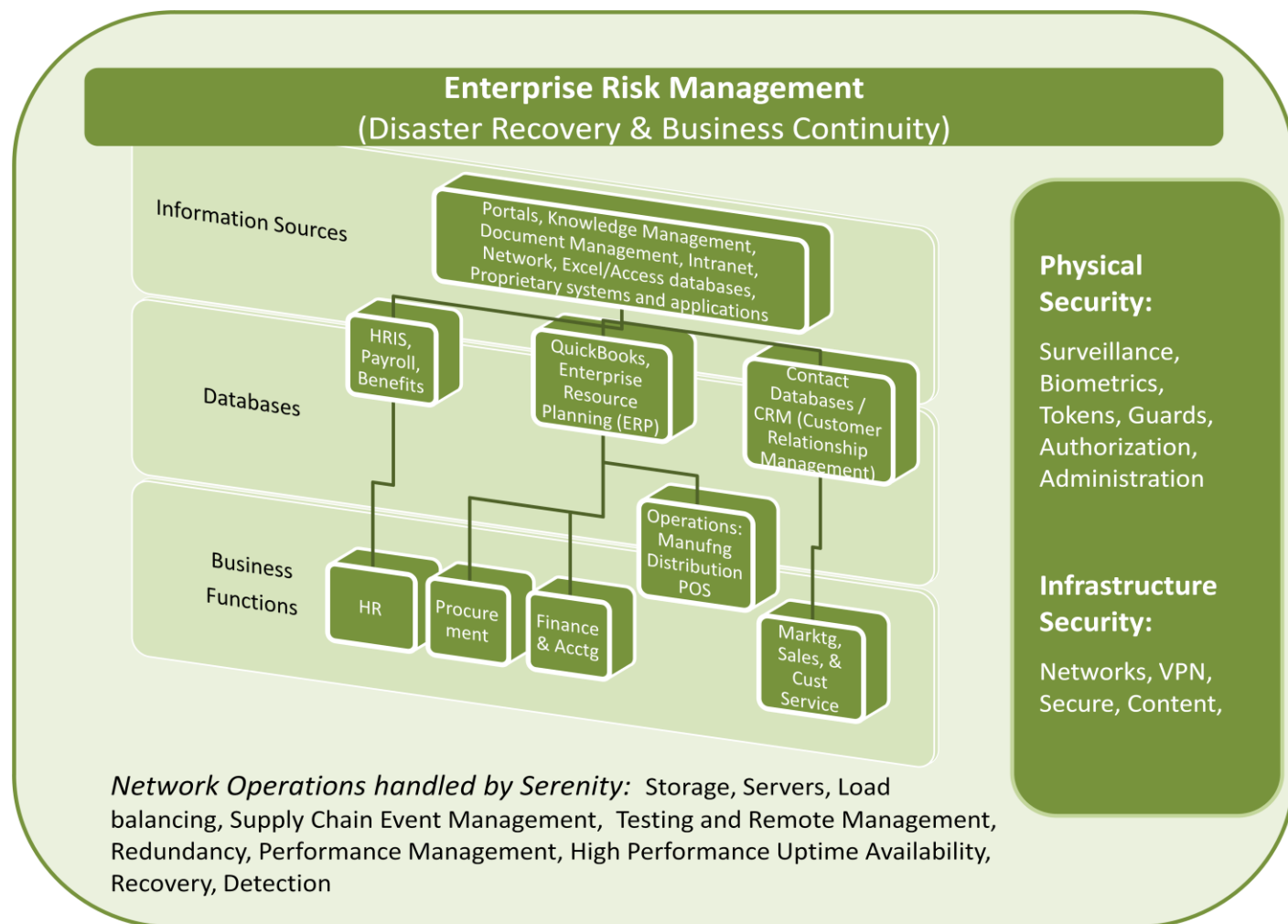
- ✓ Data & Information
- ✓ Service levels
- ✓ Employees, Vendors, Suppliers, Partners, Customers

You can prevent these unfortunate consequences by protecting your data with an effective disaster recovery plan and proper backup system. That's right, **a system and not manual processes is now the best practice**. Since disasters rarely call ahead, take time to prepare for them now -- call Serenity Systems for assistance. We'll help you develop a backup and recovery plan using the following steps:

**STEP ONE: Risk Assessment**

Identify the different kinds of information and the impact of losing each type. Next, make a cost-benefit analysis of which applications you will need access to in case of an emergency as well as how-to ensure which employees and managers can work remotely as needed. Cost-Benefit Analysis Options:

- a) Avoid the Risk: Usually the most expensive, and only required by a few firms that need 365x24x7.
- b) Mitigate the risk: less expensive than avoidance, requires the impact of the inevitable.
- c) Absorb the risk: The process or product is antiquated and downtime is acceptable.



## **STEP TWO: Business Continuity Plan Development**

During this step, we'll help you

- ✓ Build a list of partners who should be called in response to a disaster and prioritize the systems to be recovered in order of importance;
- ✓ Guide you through the process of collecting passwords, security identification and equipment; information to assist during a recovery;
- ✓ Create business continuation processes;
- ✓ Create organization recovery processes;
- ✓ Create a training program;
- ✓ Establish a plan maintenance and testing procedures; and
- ✓ Train, train, train and train some more.

## **STEP THREE: Testing**

Once your plan has been defined, test it using the people who will actually complete the recovery. This will allow us to identify areas that need improvement and ensure that your staff members understand their duties.

## **STEP FOUR: Ongoing Maintenance**

During regular reviews of your plan, we'll incorporate necessary system, equipment and procedure updates. Reviews are also excellent opportunities to train your team on changes to the plan.

With your disaster recovery plan in place, you'll be able to shift your focus to protecting your data. For many businesses, tape backup is the most popular choice -- primarily because it offers ease of use, cost-effectiveness and flexibility. In addition to designing an effective solution, we can recommend procedures to help you and your staff avoid common mistakes that occur during the backup process.

Is it time for you to get your disaster recovery plan and backup solution together? If so, contact us today at 713-647-7272, and let us help you prepare for tomorrow.