



DISASTER RECOVERY TECHNIQUES THAT PROVIDE BUSINESS CONTINUITY

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Today, more than ever, businesses place a high value on verbal communications, and **the telephone still remains their single most important communication tool**. Business owners in the Northeast have recently been faced with several painful challenges which have had a significant impact on their telephone service, and their ability to carry on business;

- The Verizon Strike
- The 5.9 earthquake
- Hurricane Irene

Was your telephone system/service affected by one of these events?

We have recently spoken to many business owners who have lost power, their phone service, or their entire phone system, and are temporarily "out of business" at their offices.

Typical service affecting issues in a business can include:

- Man Made Disasters (Union strikes, temporary outages, unreliable service, slow repair response, power blackouts)
- Natural Disasters (Hurricanes, Earthquakes)
- Localized Disasters (Fires, Floods, Lightning Strikes)
- Telephone Equipment Failures (Sometimes waiting days for parts)
- Storms and events, preventing your employees from reaching the office
- Theft and Vandalism

Do you have a Disaster Recovery plan for your business?

If the answer is "No", you are not alone- most businesses, and in particular the Small and Mid-Size Businesses- do not.

How can a business ensure they will be able to maintain reliable communications with their customers and employees at all times?

The following are some pro-active steps every business owner should take today that will ensure your business is protected in the future:

UPS Battery Backup- Sized properly for your telephone equipment, it will provide hours of uptime in the event of a power failure. It also provides protection against brownouts, which can damage equipment.

Redundant Circuit Connections- You should design in Diversity of Circuits. With Voice Over IP, Voice over Cable, and Voice over Fiber, even T1 and Analog, you have options. For example, if your FIOS circuit fails, your calls will automatically re-route using your backup Cable circuit.

Redundant Call Paths- Multiple providers should be used to ensure there are no single points of failure in the network.

Automatic Call Re-Routing- In the event all services to your business are disabled, calls to your main business number can be automatically routed to another number, answering service, or cell phone.(Automatic is the key here)

Find-Me/ Follow-Me Service- In the event your employees cannot get to the office due to, let's say, a snow storm, calls for each employee can be routed to an alternate phone, home office phone, or to their cell phones- without having to be at the office.

Up to Date Equipment- Out of warranty and obsolete equipment may be hard to repair or replace.

Maintenance Agreement- Ask your telephone system vendor, and service provider, to put their response time guarantee in writing. This is also known as an SLA (Service Level Agreement), and should include locally stocked spare parts.

Around the Clock System Monitoring- Some of the newer "Managed" systems provide end-to-end 24x7 monitoring of the entire system, so they can react and solve problems- most times before you know it occurred.

Temporary Offices/Offsite Backup- Some of the IP based systems have their messages and configurations fully backed up off site nightly. In the event of a disaster at your primary location, replacement equipment can be shipped overnight to a new temporary office location, and all telephone call routing will be replicated at the new site.

Note: Many telephone systems are rated for reliability in terms of uptime, such as "4 nines"- 99.99%, or "5 nines"- 99.999%. But, without a proper installation, planning, and the techniques mentioned above, the overall uptime on the entire installation from a service perspective can be considerably worse.

SUMMARY

Your company's telephone system remains your primary tool for customer contact and relationship building. Ensuring you maintain telephone communications with your customers is vital to the image your company projects- and to the continued success of your business. By applying the techniques mentioned above, you will be able to ensure your customers can reach you at all times.

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The company specializes in providing Managed Voice and Video Communications Systems throughout the greater New York area. Their unique all inclusive fully managed telephone systems are designed specifically to meet the needs of Small and Mid Size businesses by reducing costs and improving communications and reliability. Tom can be reached at:

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