ARE YOU PREPARED FOR DISASTER?

The iconic "fish in the window" picture taken in a Grand Rapids office building during the April Grand River flood demonstrates that disasters can and do happen right in our backyard. As rivers all across

the Midwest reached flood stage, buildings were closed, roads were underwater for days and some businesses still have not fully recovered. The devastation in Oklahoma is another stunning reminder of just how damaging natural disasters can be. While Michigan doesn't fall into "Tornado Alley", we do experience an average of 15 tornadoes annually.

But disasters are not limited to the wrath of Mother Nature. Blackouts, viruses, hackers, and acts of terrorism can all impact your business due to lost revenue, customers and valuable data.

Consider some of these statistics:

- 40% of all companies that experience
  a major disaster will go out of business if they cannot gain access to their data within 24 hours.
- Every year, 1 in 5 businesses experience a severe disaster.
- Over 40% of businesses that experience a disaster never re-open and 29% close within 2 years.

What is a 'disaster', anyway? It is an event that substantially disrupts "business as usual" and it is likely to hit your business, sooner or later. It's more a question of when, not if. So how would you answer these questions?

- Could your organization wait days to resume operations?
- Could you and your employees continue to do your job?
- How would you conduct business and communicate with your customers?
- What would be the financial impact of a prolonged disruption?
- Could your business recover and survive?

In today's increasingly technology-reliant marketplace, it is critical to have a business continuance plan. But developing a successful plan can be daunting.

Secant has successfully used our Business Continuance Planning Questionnaire as a place to start discussions.

1. Document the IT related services associated with the organization (network login, file sharing, print sharing, email services, Unified Communications (if VoIP enabled phone system), network connectivity, internet connectivity, etc…).

2. Discuss and determine the acceptable RTO (Recovery Time Objective) (i.e. acceptable downtime) for each of the specified IT related services, including ideal minimum as well as worst case scenario maximum times in hours/days/weeks, or months.

3. Discuss and determine the acceptable RPO (Recovery Point Objective) (i.e. acceptable data loss) for each of the applicable IT related services, including ideal minimum as well as worst case scenario maximum loss in hours/days/weeks, or months. *Example: If file data is backed up to tape once per day, and tape is taken off site once per month, then the acceptable data loss maximum is 1 month.*

4. Discuss several possible minor and major disaster recovery scenarios and their potential associated downtime and resulting data loss impacts on the organization; fire, flood, water damage, theft, environmental contamination, server operating system crash, major software corruption, etc...

Our consultants can help you and your staff to identify critical systems and workflows that would be affected, what your disaster recovery objectives should be and develop an effective IT Business Continuance Plan.

With a plan in place, Secant can help you implement strategies and technology solutions to ensure that should disaster strike, you will have the ability to continue to do "business as usual". Let us show you how!