

Product Brief

SunGard Managed Recovery Program: Relief for IT

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Abstract: IT organizations are tasked to manage rapid change from both technology and the business. This state of constant change creates an element of risk: if a key application is not documented or a step in an application recovery process is not covered, recovery tests may fail or, worse, applications and data may be lost in a live disaster scenario. SunGard's Managed Recovery Program (MRP) alleviates the pain associated with application recovery and the related challenges of change management and updating recovery plans by allowing customers to outsource these critical but oftentimes neglected tasks. SunGard's program is uniquely designed for each customer to help meet its RTO/RPO service levels.

Overview

The speed of business evolution carries with it constant change. Change for the right reasons is important to growing a business, expanding into adjacent markets, and identifying new revenue opportunities. And IT has become much more integral in supporting business expansion and growth, which means it, too, must move at the same speed or faster to keep up as new applications, services, and systems are requested and added. Recovery time and recovery point objectives (RTO/RPO) for tier-1 applications are constantly shortening to meet the expectations of global business and 24x7 operations and changes in an IT environment, if not tracked and documented, can introduce risk. IT organizations may face risk of recovering an application, data, or an entire system and possibly fail to satisfy service level agreements (SLAs) or fail altogether. SunGard's Managed Recovery Program (MRP) is designed to help IT organizations overcome the risks associated with change in their environments. Recovery plans are as essential as the applications and systems running the business and yet, in the face of flat to shrinking IT staff resources, the chances of having a resource committed to ensuring recovery plans are updated and tested seem to be slim.

We all can agree that change, especially in IT, is for the most part a constant, but in order to successfully keep up with all of the core functions IT supports, resources are required. ESG recently conducted a survey that explored IT staffing outlook for 2011 and found a very slight increase for some organizations (39%) that will be adding some IT staff members with the majority (57%) stating the staffing would remain flat or decline.¹ The IT skills areas that will see hiring this year are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Areas Where New IT Staff will be Added in 2011

Skills Area	Percent of Respondents
Application Development	44%
Database Administration	36%
Information Security	35%
Virtualization deployment and administration	33%
Network Administration	33%
Compliance Management, Monitoring, and Reporting	22%
Data Protection (i.e., Backup/Recovery)	18%

Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, 2011.

¹ Source: ESG Research Report, [2011 IT Spending Intentions Survey](#), January 2011.

Two areas critical to helping reduce risk and mitigate loss or exposure are compliance management, monitoring, and reporting and data protection, with only 22% and 18%, respectively, of organizations responding with intent to add these skill areas to the IT staff. These functions are typically associated with offsite disaster recovery, business continuity and the associated planning—the data illustrates IT’s acknowledgement of the importance of these functions (as they are among the top ten hiring areas), but they do not appear to be of primary concern. These tasks are being given to storage and virtualization administrators who may now have to divide their time instead of focusing on their core functions and responsibilities. SunGard, with its 30+ years of expertise in business continuity and disaster recovery strategic planning and execution within its own managed facilities, is one of the few companies with firsthand experience helping some of the largest IT organizations meet their data recovery expectations. Leveraging its acquired knowledge, SunGard has created the MRP to systematically address any IT organization that is tasked with making sure its DR plan is updated, tested, and ready for action.

SunGard MRP

An Extension of IT

The MRP by SunGard essentially provides a resource to ensure proper controls are in place to monitor changes within the IT ecosystem and update recovery plans as needed, making sure these plans are tested and, in the event of a declaration of disaster, that they can meet an organization’s stated SLA. Unlike other offerings that provide only the recovery infrastructure without the expertise, SunGard delivers both, eliminating the trial by error approach many IT organizations have adopted when it comes to disaster recovery. The MRP addresses the pain points associated with the application recovery process by first assuming responsibility for the majority of the steps involved in the off-site recovery lifecycle (as compared to having the customer attempt disaster recovery on their own) and ensuring that lifecycle meets best practices designed to mitigate risks, ensure successful test and recoverability of key business processes and applications, increase efficiencies, and lower costs.

SunGard has a documented process that is consistently followed when developing a plan, making the plan unique for each IT organization specific needs and requirements.

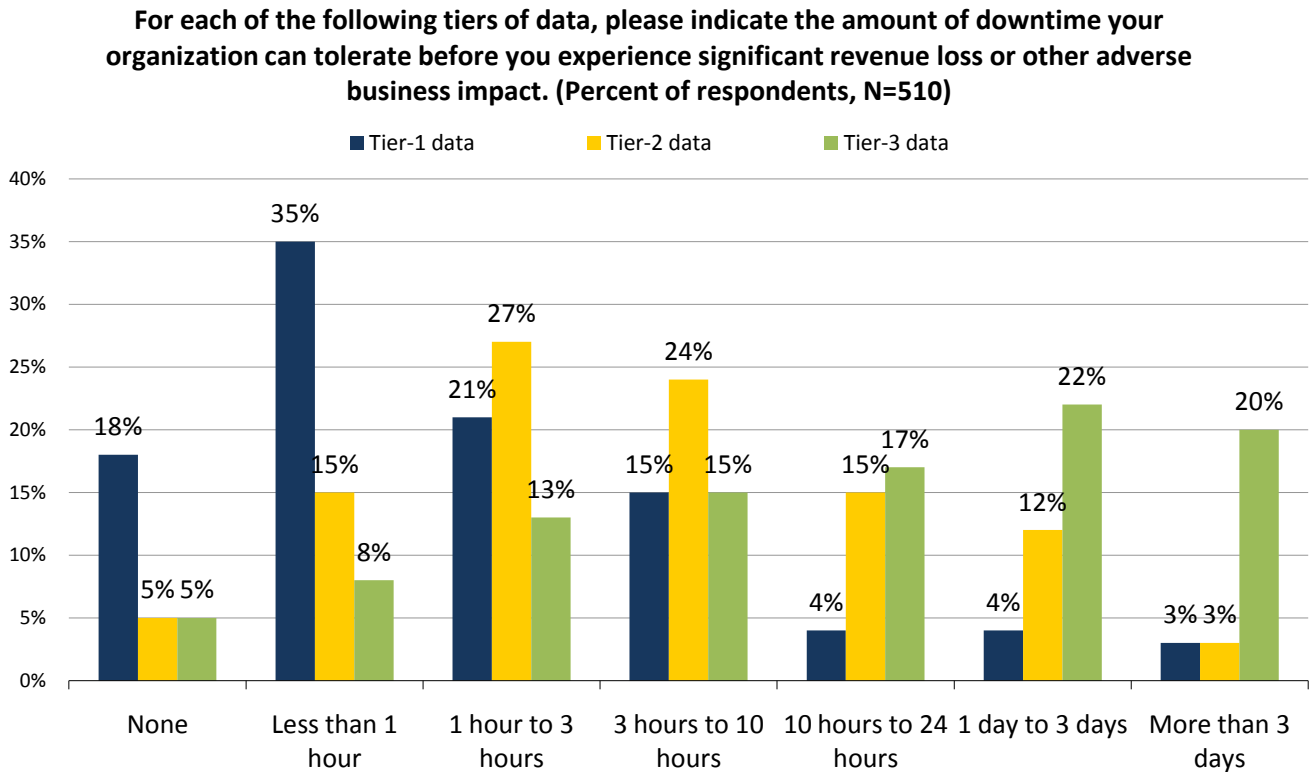
Based on its track record of success in offering recovery services, SunGard has defined a recovery lifecycle which identifies critical steps in complex application recovery along with best practices for ensuring success at each step. This lifecycle is the foundation for all SunGard recovery services.

Analysis

According to ESG research, customers have big concerns and challenges ahead of them: over 70% of survey respondents cite tolerating three hours or less downtime for tier-1 mission-critical data.² Considering the challenges IT organizations face, it is hard to believe they will have the time to properly adapt, update, test, and execute a disaster recovery plan successfully. One misstep, one oversight can lead to intolerable downtime, which is why the SunGard MRP is such a key service offering that is specifically designed to help IT meet stated RTOs/RPOs.

² Source: ESG Research Report, [2010 Data Protection Trends](#), April 2010.

Figure 1. Tolerable Downtime Before Negative Business Impact



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, 2011.

The SunGard solution has several key benefits, but the top benefits for IT organizations are that it:

- Mitigates risk
- Lowers IT costs
- Increases IT organization effectiveness and confidence in recovery plans
- Leverages proven best practices for establishing and executing DR tests
- Increases recovery system efficiency

The Bigger Truth

For IT personnel, disaster recovery planning, testing, and maintenance are hard enough when it is a primary focus—it becomes near impossible when it is not their “day job.” It is human nature to focus on the primary tasks at hand; too often, DR is left on the back burner. This is a little like playing the odds and some customers can go years without a disaster, some just weeks—but whenever the declaration and the plan must be executed, it’s important to know that the DR plan will work and the organization can recover within the timeframe stated in the SLA.

It makes sense to want to subscribe to a service like the MRP. It seems quite logical really: if you don’t have the time or resources to properly manage this ever-critical function, why risk the business if there is a solution available to do it for you? Change is inevitable in an IT environment, but when change impacts production, having a solid, trusted contingency plan that helps mitigate risk of downtime may be just as valuable as the systems, data and applications it is designed to protect. It is a policy insuring the some of the most critical assets to the business, data, applications, and systems.

IT organizations that are really serious about mitigating risk and avoiding loss or exposure due to unplanned downtime may want to strengthen change management processes and find ways to best identify/apply patches during a test to help production applications run better and more secure. It seems that IT organizations may achieve all of this by taking advantage of the SunGard Managed Recovery Program.