

STAYING ON COURSE

Proper planning can help any organization weather any unexpected calamity that threatens to disrupt operations.

Persistent unemployment. An offshore oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. With stories like these dominating the headlines this year, it's easy to understand why Americans have put out of their minds one of last year's greatest anxieties, the threat of an influenza pandemic that could, temporarily at least, bring the nation, including corporate America, to its knees.

For now, the threat of a flu pandemic seems relatively low. The World Health Organization declared in August that the swine flu (H1N1) pandemic that swept the world last year is officially over, despite some outbreaks in Australia and New Zealand, where August is the middle of winter.

Even so, a flu epidemic cannot be summarily cut from the list of U.S. concerns. Unlike smallpox, influenza has not been vanquished. The virus lives on in large numbers of pigs and could mutate into a strain for which humans have little resistance—and that could be particularly menacing for businesses. From April 2009 through March of 2010, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that swine flu infected up to 88 million Americans and killed as many as 18,000. "In terms of productive years lost, that flu epidemic was not mild," maintains Michael Osterholm, Ph.D., director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota. "The mean age of those who died is from the late 30s through the late 40s."



In other words, swine flu threatened the heart of the workforce, and if a new form arrives this winter it will hit a labor pool weakened in size by companies' determination to keep staffs trim through the recession. One rule of thumb is that a company can count on having as many as 40% of its employees sidelined during a serious epidemic; some will be sick themselves while others will stay home to care for ailing children or parents. Losing two-fifths of a full-size workforce would be a hindrance; losing two-fifths of a reduced staff could be crippling.

"It's a very critical situation today with so many companies having downsized—and their suppliers having downsized, as well," says Rick Toler, executive

vice president and general manager of SunGard Availability Services, a provider of disaster recovery, managed IT services, business continuity management software and consulting to more than 10,000 customers.

"We are advising clients that the time to prepare is now, when they can do so in a non-panic mode," Toler continues. SunGard helps clients prepare an overall disaster plan that is often overseen by the chief risk officer that starts with a business impact assessment and results in a detailed plan that includes alternatives for key operations and cross-training for employees so that they can substitute for one another. SunGard urges companies to test plans repeatedly to discover where they might break down and emphasizes that the plan must be communicated to all employees. "Worry about the weakest link," Toler advises. "Crucial employees might have to communicate from home. Do they have broadband connections to headquarters?"

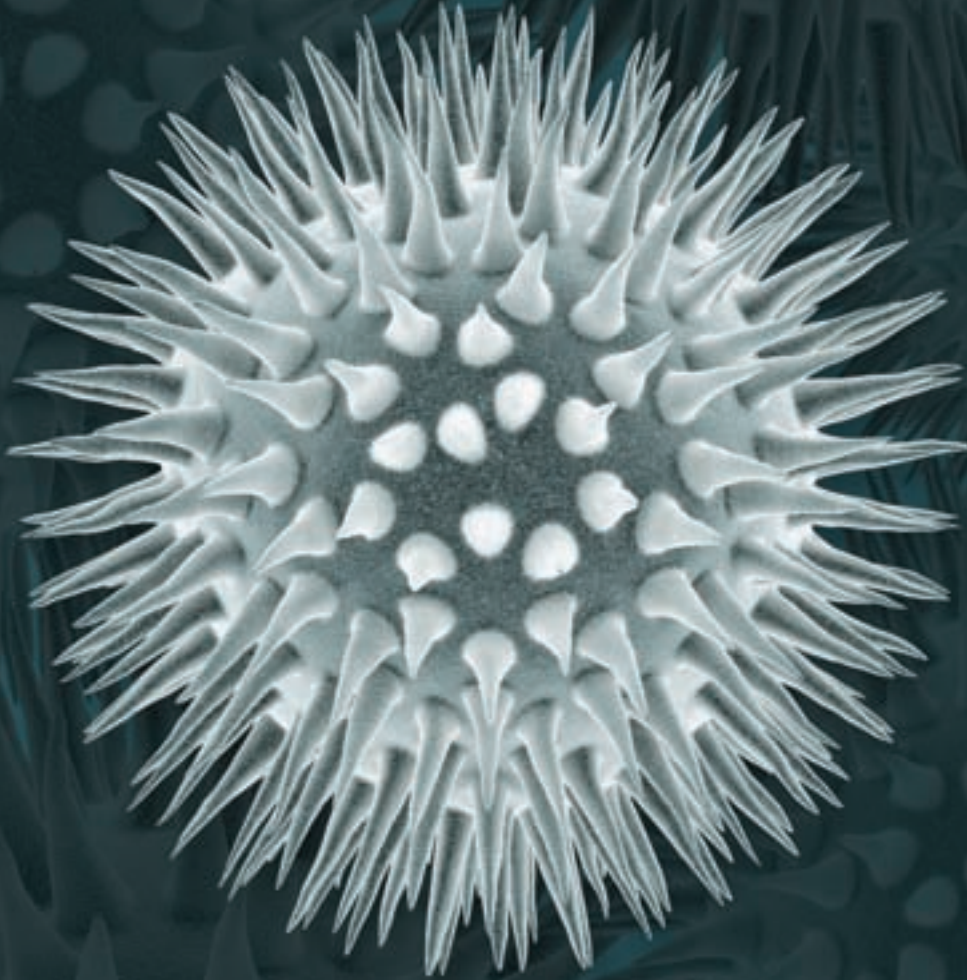
Swine flu is not the only potential calamity. Many other catastrophes, natural or man-made, could bring a company or a community to a standstill.

"A true continuity plan considers the impacts from everyday issues such as a hardware or power failure, while also accounting for an unforeseen event."

Indeed, the most challenging disasters are often those that are entirely unexpected. Who could have guessed in 2009 that the most disruptive event of 2010 would be a damaged oil well in the Gulf of Mexico? Keep your guard up. ●

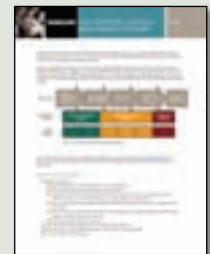
Meet your company's biggest threat.

Orthomyxoviridae (Influenza Virus)



Pandemic planning is no longer optional.

No organization, large or small, can escape the fact that a pandemic situation is still a growing threat with serious repercussions. The likelihood of business risk related to staffing shortages and other disruptions is real. Health and government authorities worldwide are warning enterprises to take preemptive action to mitigate vulnerabilities and exposure. SunGard's Pandemic Response Planning can help your organization prepare for the unique risks posed by a global or regional epidemic.



Download the pandemic response checklist at:
sungardas.com/pandemic

© 2010 SunGard. SunGard and the SunGard logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of SunGard Data Systems Inc. or its subsidiaries in the U.S. and other countries. All other trade names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders.



SUNGARD

AVAILABILITY SERVICES

