

WORKPLACE RECOVERY

Ipswich Building Society banks on staying open for business

Founded in 1849, Ipswich Building Society is one of the UK's most trusted building societies. It is committed to its mutual status, which allows it to put members' interests first. The building society prides itself on providing a full range of financial services for Suffolk's rural and coastal communities. These include mortgages, loans, savings products, insurance cover and financial advice.

While, fortunately, Ipswich Building Society has not yet experienced a disaster, it recognises the importance of having an effective business continuity plan to mitigate its most likely risks: head office or a branch being inaccessible and key systems being unavailable due to a power or hardware failure. Ronnie Weston, Assistant General Manager Technical Services explains Ipswich Building Society chose Sungard Availability Services as its BC partner because, ["We know Sungard is the biggest specialist provider and has a brilliant track record."](#)

Ipswich Building Society had business continuity plans in place for individual departments and the Society as a whole but these became out of date when it outsourced its IT infrastructure. It contracted Sungard AS's Consulting Services to benefit from its decades of experience and specialist expertise. Drawing on industry recommended good practice, Sungard AS's consultants helped the Building Society's project team produce a workable plan that would ensure the continuity of head office

functions. They also helped gain buy-in from the Society's Board of Directors. When an external firm subsequently audited the plan, it was rated grade 1, the highest possible score.

The Society already had access to limited alternative workplace accommodation by taking advantage of spare capacity at its three Ipswich branches. But, recognising this alone would not be adequate to safeguard its daily operations, the Society took the precaution of reserving 35 seats at one of Sungard AS's fully equipped workplace recovery centres.

Not only does Ipswich Building Society now have the reassurance of knowing they have an alternative workplace that gives them cutting edge technology, advanced telephony and secure access to their data, they have the added peace of mind that comes from Sungard AS's 'rollback' capability. This enables customers to be recovered to an alternative Sungard AS facility should their primary choice of centre be unavailable due to widespread or multiple disasters.



Business problem

Ipswich Building Society is committed to providing a reliable and personal service to its members and, consequently, uninterrupted access to critical systems and information is vital. Having made the decision to outsource its IT infrastructure to benefit from the latest technology, it took the opportunity to review its business continuity management (BCM) provision and approached Sungard AS for help.

Solution

- Workplace Recovery
- Consultancy Services.

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Assistant General Manager
Technical Services,
Ipswich Building Society



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 Assistant General Manager,
 Technical Services,
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Business benefits

- Enables the building society to provide an uninterrupted service to members
- Preserves Ipswich Building Society’s reputation for reliability
- Prevents defection of members to competitors
- Protects jobs by maintaining market confidence in the business
- Ensures compliance with regulatory requirements
- Avoids financial loss.

Places at the recovery centre will be allocated to departments according to the criticality of their business function, which can vary according to the time of day, day of the week and time of year. Ronnie Weston explains, “Our Mortgage Department may have accounts that must complete by the end of the business day to avoid financial penalties. Similarly, as year end approaches, the Finance team may be regarded as top priority.”

On Sungard AS’s advice, all the Building Society’s employees have been issued with credit-card sized booklets containing emergency contact numbers, instructions on what to do in the event of a business interruption and directions to the Sungard AS recovery site. Four different versions were produced, tailored according to category – Incident Management Team member, key holder, team leaders and all other staff.

The Society has also set up a dedicated 0845 information line to keep staff updated on developments and work instructions in the aftermath of an interruption. In addition, BC planning has been incorporated within the induction process for new starters to build awareness from day one.

Should disaster strike, a nominated communications expert will work from one of the branches, directed by the Society’s Chief Executive, to keep employees, intermediaries and the press informed.

After conducting its first test at the Sungard AS recovery centre, Ronnie Weston reported, “The test, which involved our Finance and Mortgages departments, went very well. It highlighted one issue that we’ve since resolved, which only demonstrates the importance of testing. Our chief executive says he can now sleep at night!”

Ipswich Building Society is not complacent. Ronnie Weston remarks, “We now have a robust plan that we know stands up to testing. But we’re aware it’s a living document. Situations and personnel change so it’s very much an ongoing process.”

Ronnie Weston is optimistic the Society is firmly on the right path. She says, “I’ve been very impressed by all the Sungard people I’ve dealt with, including our consultant and the staff at the test site. With Sungard on our side, I’m totally confident that we’ll be able to cope with anything that’s thrown at us!”

About Sungard Availability Services

Sungard Availability Services provides managed IT services, information availability consulting services, business continuity management software, and disaster recovery services. To learn more, visit www.sungardas.co.uk or call 0800 143 413

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