

AB KEEPS CLIENTS AND BUSINESS PREPARED FOR WHAT HAPPENS NEXT



As an asset management and research firm with more than \$600 billion under its watch, AB knows the value of preparing clients today to keep ahead of what might happen tomorrow. When it comes to preparing its own business, AB protects core trading operations and business processes from disaster or disruption with a Dedicated Workplace Recovery solution from Sungard Availability Services (Sungard AS).



ABOUT THE COMPANY

AllianceBernstein (AB) is a leading global investment management firm that offers high-quality research and diversified investment services to institutional investors, individuals and private wealth clients in major world markets. Headquartered in Nashville, TN, the company's 3,800+ employees serve clients from 51 locations across 25 countries and jurisdictions.

SOLUTIONS

- Dedicated Workplace Recovery Services from Sungard AS
- A well-planned, multi-tiered recovery strategy
- Frequent testing for readiness

RESULTS

- An alternate, geographically separated workplace for continuous trading and other key business operation resiliency needs
- Proven resilience strategy meeting high expectations of clients
- Protection against widespread workforce disruptions
- Prepared for civil unrest, health crises, severe weather and other catastrophic events

“ You can't just plan on everyone working from home. During a disruption, there are always certain business operations and systems that need to be accessed from an office. Our Workplace Recovery Solution from Sungard AS is like a Continuity of Business feature of our enterprise business continuity program. It gives us peace of mind, knowing we're definitely covered for any type of disaster.”

Matthew Klimansky

*Business Continuity Manager
Infrastructure Risk Management Team,
AllianceBernstein*





THE CHALLENGE

While many companies have had business continuity plans in place for years, the COVID-19 virus is transforming how they think about and approach their readiness to withstand a disruptive event. Whether natural or man-made, no event has had such a profound and far-reaching impact on the world's workforce.

In the finance industry, investment professionals are expected to diligently protect client assets without skipping a beat, even during turbulent times when their work environment is anything but normal.

Whether in a period of wellness or health crisis, Matthew Klimansky, Business Continuity Manager for the AB Infrastructure Risk Management Team,

says AB clients expect the same level of diligence—including responding to COVID-19 challenges or any other potential disruptive incidents.

“Regardless of what’s going on in the world, we have high net worth clients that expect to be serviced,” he says, adding how the virus has impacted business recovery plans for AB.

“While we’ll typically plan for severe weather-related outages, power outages or internet outages, now—more than ever—we realize there are a lot of other things that can keep us from using our primary sites, the pandemic being one,” he says. “We may have planned for pandemics in the past, but never to the scale we’re seeing and responding to now.”



THE SOLUTION

A recovery workplace keeps trades flowing

With corporate offices in New York, Nashville and London, Klimansky's team is responsible for workplace recovery solutions that span the company's global research and investment operations. Sungard AS Workplace Recovery Centers in London, Long Island City and New York protect these business operations from the impact of disaster or disruption.

In the New York metro area alone, three AB locations support the entire U.S. The Sungard AS Long Island City facility provides an alternate, ready-to-use emergency office environment, playing a critical role in meeting the demands of AB customers who expect recovery in the shortest amount of time.

“When we have due diligence calls with clients and prospects, they ask about our business continuity and crisis management plans,” Klimansky says.

“That’s why we have strategically located sites in the metro area, so they know we can resume operations without any logistical challenges for our key staff resources.”

The solution provides fully dedicated recovery suites, reserved solely for the use of AB employees.

Designed to AB's precise specifications, the environment includes 98 seats split into two workspaces, complete with desktops and phones, as well as Bloomberg terminals and news feeds for financial analysts and traders. The suites also include a telecom room, a canteen and a conference room with laptops for additional people.

If a disruption impacts an AB site, workers can quickly relocate to the nearest recovery center. Weekly software image updates keep AB's production and recovery environments in sync to speed productivity once employees arrive.

One suite supports research analysts and buy-side traders from finance, legal and other operations. The other, equipped with technology not typically suited for working at home, is used exclusively for sell-side traders. It features 12 desks large enough to fit the eight-to-ten monitors that give traders the data access needed for efficient decision making and operations.

“Having a dedicated recovery space was the way to go,” Klimansky says. “If an issue arises, it makes it easier for them to start working again seamlessly as soon as they get to the recovery center.”



THE SOLUTION (continued)

A rich history with Sungard AS

When Hurricane Sandy hit in 2012, New York and New Jersey suffered severe damage, leaving nearly two million people without power. The Sungard AS Recovery Center, located in Carlstadt, NJ at the time, provided a sheltered workplace for more than 3,000 Sungard AS customers including 100 AB employees over the course of three weeks. The storm hit on Sunday, and many workers were in the Sungard AS facility on Monday.

“While our offices remained intact with backup generators and uninterruptible power supply, employees who lived in New Jersey couldn’t get into New York,” explains Klimansky. “When our staff arrived at the Carlstadt site, we had the network connectivity and power needed, so it was almost business as usual for us.”

The Long Island Recovery Center also provided a site for mission-critical AB workers after Hurricane Isaias in 2020, which again knocked out power in upstate New York and New Jersey—and all during the workforce challenges of dealing with COVID-19.

A three-pronged pandemic response

While the pandemic paralyzed the workforces of many companies, AB’s workplace recovery plan eased what could have been a productivity-halting experience.

“Once we saw the pandemic coming and cases starting to add up, our technology teams started shipping PCs to traders’ homes,” confirms Klimansky. Zoom and other remote support tools assisted them with their operational setups.

This was all part of AB’s multi-point resilience strategy to disperse traders across three workplaces, meeting continuity needs and the COVID-19 pandemic health response protocols.

“Trading is our most critical function, so we wanted to make sure it was supported in three separate areas,” he explains. “If traders at home lost power, this strategy enabled us to have traders not only in the office, but also in the Sungard AS Recovery Center.”



THE RESULTS

Klimansky, who recently renewed his four-year contract for Workplace Recovery Services, credits Sungard AS with lessening the impact of large-scale workforce disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and other severe weather-related events.

“My Sungard AS team makes workforce transitions as easy as possible for us,” he says. “When we need them, it’s a simple phone call or email to let them know we’ll be sending people there the next day. They respond within minutes, and our space is up and running when we get there. That’s where Sungard AS really excels—in the dedication and responsiveness of the people who work there.”

“Test, test, test,” he says, noting the frequent drills that relocate traders and other critical staff to the Sungard AS Workplace Recovery Center to test not only systems and processes, but also the logistics involved with moving staff between locations, including home offices.

“You might think everyone has the capability of working from home, but test that capability to ensure your infrastructure can actually support them,” he advises. “That’s one of the lessons we learned early on with Hurricane Sandy. Now we know everyone globally has the capability of working from home, because that’s something we test a few times a year.”

But, he notes, shifting employees from the office to home is only part of a recovery solution.

“You can’t just plan on everyone working from home. During a disruption, there are always certain business operations and systems that need to be accessed from an office,” he says. “It gives us peace of mind, knowing we’re definitely covered for any type of disaster.”

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www.sungardas.com

If you are calling from
North America contact us at:

+1 (866) 714-7209

If you are calling from
EMEA contact us at:

+44 0808 238 8080

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