

JUMPSTARTING RECOVERY TO ACCELERATE SUCCESS



Managing more than 2 million roadside rescues a year, the RAC knows the importance of responding to a breakdown—whether it's related to vehicles, business processes or IT. If disruption hits any of the three facilities supporting core applications and call center operations, a carefully planned resilience strategy, including a Sungard AS Workplace Recovery solution, can jumpstart recovery to resume business.

SOLUTIONS

- Workplace Recovery Services
- Business Continuity Consulting Services
- Executive crisis awareness workshops

RESULTS

- A complete recovery strategy for people, processes and technologies
- Three geographically separated recovery centers to quickly resume operations
- Secure, environmentally controlled facilities with several hundred seats
- High-speed connectivity, enterprise-grade equipment
- Regular testing to prove recovery readiness
- Crisis management coaching prepared executive team for COVID-19 response



ABOUT THE COMPANY

The **RAC** provides complete peace of mind roadside assistance and vehicle breakdown services to more than 12 million private and business drivers across the UK. Headquartered in Walsall in the West Midlands with around 4,000 employees, the RAC also offers car insurance, vehicle inspections, legal services, up-to-the-minute traffic and travel information, and has a network of approved dealers and garages.

“I’ve been in business continuity for twenty years, and the way our workplace recovery solution has been set up is the best I’ve ever seen. I trust my Sungard AS recovery team 100 percent. That trust is key, especially when you’re in a crisis.”

Derek McNeill

RAC Business Continuity & IT Risk Manager



THE CHALLENGE

Creating a workplace alternative for hundreds of employees

The RAC has been rescuing stricken drivers at the roadside longer than any other breakdown assistance organisation. Today, the RAC uses a computer-aided dispatch system to answer calls for assistance from its customers whether they have phoned in to request help or logged their breakdown online.

But it is the RAC's customer contact centers that must respond to calls for help from both consumer and commercial customers, while supporting sales operations, as well. All of these business processes, along with the RAC's core applications, are supported by an outsourced off-site data center that provides remote access to multiple RAC facilities.

"We have three key business premises in Manchester, Walsall and Bristol," explains Derek McNeill, the RAC's Business Continuity & IT Risk

Manager, about the need for resilient operations. "The contact centers there manage a combined four million breakdown calls a year, so loss of power or data connectivity to our external data center is our main concern."

Since nearly 800 employees across the sites rely on access to be productive, the RAC knows its business continuity strategy must go beyond managing IT disruption to managing workforce disruption. It also knows the importance of preparing both staff and executives for a crisis, whether caused by weather-related incidents or newer challenges, such as a pandemic.

"COVID 19 has changed the shape of business for lots of companies," McNeill says. "It literally changed our way of working and how we approach our business continuity planning."



THE SOLUTION

Fully equipped, ready-to-use office environments

For the last 10 years, Sungard AS Workplace Recovery Centers have played a significant role in the RAC's overall business resilience strategy. Today, whether caused by power, weather or other factors disrupting normal operations, the RAC has three geographically separated Sungard AS recovery centers available to resume business.

The RAC contract, recently renewed for another three years, includes sufficient seating capacity to support the RAC business operation within Sungard AS' Workplace Recovery Centers, with access for up to 13 weeks at a time. Each Workplace Recovery Centre environment is designed with the physical security, power management, environmental controls and high-speed connectivity the RAC needs for a smooth transition.

"Once we invoke Recovery Services, our RAC network is extended into a Sungard AS Recovery Center," says McNeill. "When we walk inside, we have PCs, phones and desks ready for us, with secure access to our IT and telephony systems."

For example, if an incident occurs at either the Manchester or Walsall RAC call center facility, workers and workloads handling consumer requests would shift to the uncompromised RAC site. Contact center operations for commercial vehicle breakdowns would transfer to a Sungard AS Recovery Center in Coventry.

Core back-office functions, such as finance and HR, could also shift to the Sungard AS Coventry site. Select workers and workloads supporting sales operations in the Bristol RAC call center would move to a Sungard AS Recovery Site in Bristol.



THE SOLUTION (continued)

McNeill cites a January 2019 power outage in the RAC Walsall office as one instance that proved the RAC's readiness for disruption. The building was without heat for more than 12 hours.

The Sungard AS Coventry site quickly prepared for an influx of 240 RAC employees. "I got a call at 8:00 in the morning," says McNeil. "I was in the Sungard AS Recovery Center by 8:45, and the site was ready for us."

Crisis management consulting for executives

The RAC's Business Continuity solution with Sungard AS also features crisis management coaching for RAC executives. Delivered through awareness workshops and exercises, the goal is to prepare leaders for a range of crisis scenarios, from cyber-attacks that threaten IT systems to incidents that may put the company's reputation at risk.

During these workshops, Sungard AS consultants share best practice approaches and advice to help executives understand the problem at hand, analyse the impact, identify priorities and take action to manage and resolve incidents – including dealing with the media, regulators, customers and employees.

Drawing upon actual case studies and crisis scenarios, Sungard AS consultants engage

executives in in-depth discussions and hands-on exercises, using proven principles, plans and processes that can be applied in many situations.

"Each time our Sungard AS consultant is here, he puts a slightly different spin on the exercises, using real-world stories our executives can relate to," says McNeill, noting the six workshops completed over the past three years. "My first experience with a Sungard AS workshop in 2018 helped me re-write and document our crisis management strategies to be more meaningful."

In addition, McNeill created a wallet-sized card, which each executive now carries, including key information for invoking, managing and resolving an incident. In 2020, all this forethought helped the company prepare for an unforeseen situation impacting organisations the world over.

"I believe the crisis management exercises we went through with Sungard AS in January helped us manage the COVID-19 pandemic better than we would have last year," confirms McNeill. "They served as a pre-emptive strike that gave executives a 'heads up' on what could happen. So, when the virus hit in March, their minds were already in the right place to react to it."





THE RESULTS

Tested and proved disaster readiness

With the Sungard AS solution as part of its overall resilience strategy, McNeill is confident the RAC is risk ready.

"I've been in business continuity for twenty years, and the way our Workplace Recovery solution has been set up is the best I've ever seen," he says. "I know I can walk into the Sungard AS Recovery Center and, within an hour of being onsite, I can actually have connectivity restored. Within three hours of invocation, I know we'll have the systems in place to continue operations."

With change being a constant, the RAC also has plans in place to ensure recovery solutions stay in sync with business operations. To make sure the recovery PCs are prepared for use, the RAC creates a software image, applies security patches and sends the image to Sungard AS. But putting recovery plans and processes through regular, rigorous testing provides the RAC with the assurance it needs.

Until now, testing for each of the three RAC facilities took place twice per year. Going forward, each site will be tested once, four months apart to reduce the workload on McNeill's teams and keep the images current.

For true-to-life exercises, McNeill always relocates people from the business areas, such as finance or sales, to a Sungard AS Recovery Site. Testing typically includes setting up 100 PCs and distributing workers throughout one or two suites.

"Every time we run an exercise, we have live access to RAC systems, so everything we do represents

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business as usual," explains McNeill. "We go through the business continuity plan to see how it works for each area to identify discrepancies with how they actually work in the office. With 50 business areas involved, testing gives me a chance to make updates to verify that every single plan is correct."

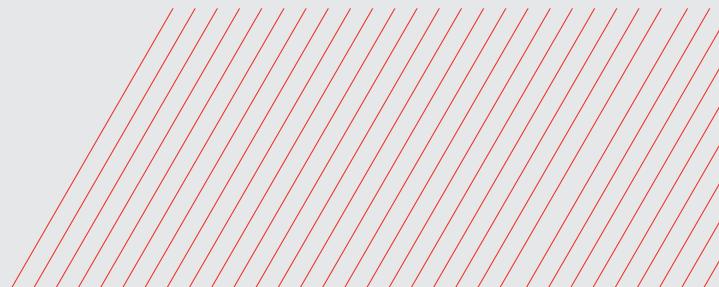
Continuity confidence

Proven recovery practices bring peace of mind to the RAC, as well as its base of commercial customers, including Mercedes-Benz.

"Our corporate partners come in and audit us every year. As soon as I say I have a contract with Sungard AS for backup capacity for my site, they're happy," McNeill says. "It gives me confidence that we can continue business if we lose one of our premises. And, it gives our corporate partners confidence that we can continue to serve them."

McNeill looked at other work area recovery solutions before renewing his long-term contract for another three years.

"I can always count on Sungard AS," he says. "While there are a lot of companies that provide office space and network connectivity, the professional services Sungard AS provides are the most valuable to us," McNeill continues. "When we run the recovery exercise, the fact that it works the first time, every time, gives me confidence in their capabilities. I trust my recovery team 100 percent. That trust is key, especially when you're in a crisis."





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