

Business Survival Newsletter“

BUSINESS SURVIVAL(tm):

A BUSINESS CONTINUITY NEWSLETTER FOR DECISION MAKERS
FROM ROTHSTEIN ASSOCIATES INC.

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===== WE WON T BE FOOLED AGAIN

Maybe The Who ... won t be fooled again, but we wonder about some companies. A west-coast technology company (who shall remain mercifully nameless) recently panicked when an I Love You email somehow sneaked past their firewalls and antivirus software. They quickly shut down their network (and effectively their business) for several hours while their infosecurity gurus did their thing, only to learn that this was truly true love - it really was an I Love You message to an employee from his girlfriend!

Whether it s complex, unfathomable human emotions, flesh-eating Costa Rican bananas, chain letters, or the latest computer virus scare, it seems to us that disinformation may be as ugly a threat to business continuity as the nasties that business continuity folks usually target.

Here are some places to look for prime sucker-bait:

The AFU (alt.folklore.urban) and Urban Legend Archive
www.urbanlegends.com

The San Fernando Valley Folklore Society's Urban Legends Reference Pages
www.snopes.com

U.S. Department of Energy Computer Incident Advisory Capability - Internet Hoax
<http://ciac.llnl.gov/ciac/CIACHoaxes.html>

U.S. Department of Energy Computer Incident Advisory Capability - Chain Letters

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<http://ciac.llnl.gov/ciac/CIACChainLetters.html>
F-Secure Corporation Hoax Warnings
<http://www.f-secure.com/news/hoax/>

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TOP MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE: SURVEY SAYS...

We asked in our last issue of Business Survival(tm) about the attitude of top management to BCM (Business Continuity Management). 40 readers responded:

1. Viewed principally as an enterprise 24% or IT 76% function?
2. Considered a cost center 68% or a core component 32% of the enterprise mission?

Bonus question for extra credit:

3. (Thanks to comedian George Carlin): What was the best thing before sliced bread? Would you believe eight readers responded: sex???

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SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS IN BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT by Andrew Hiles, FBCI

Any support service, whether in-house, contracted or outsourced, stands to be accused of being insensitive to the requirements of its customers (or users) and of providing inadequate service. Equally customers of a support service may have unrealistic expectations of what can be reasonably provided by it. To overcome these gulfs support services are increasingly turning to Service Level Agreements. However, during the most crucial time for any business - recovering from a disaster - neither customer or recovery service supplier is usually protected by a Service Level Agreement.

A Service Level Agreement (SLA) is simply an agreement between the support service and the user quantifying the minimum acceptable service to the user. SLAs are particularly valuable in time-critical processing - which certainly includes recovery. They may be complex and lengthy or simple one-page documents - but they are frequently seen as indispensable to providing good service and sound relationships between vendor and customer.

A complete SLA covers:

- Purpose of SLA;
- Service hours and scheduled service outages;
- Service description;
- Responsibilities;
- Support hours and a definition of what is and what is not covered by "support";
- Service levels for each service product
- Service level for varying time regimes (e.g. evenings, overnight, weekends, public holidays)
- Peak period details;
- Charging (if appropriate);
- Security requirements;

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- Impact of loss of service;
- Output requirements;
- Change control;
- Customer support and help desk facilities;
- Service level reporting;
- Contacts - both in the user area and within the support service area.

Key service level indicators can be defined by application and these may include:

- Availability;
- Response time;
- Reliability (including First Time Fix);
- Deliverables.

Most contracts for recovery sites and recovery services are brief and SLAs are rarely offered - although vendors are usually willing to negotiate one. Typically, a vendor contract for a recovery site will only offer "access" to equipment. Many contracts we have seen quote a day rate for "support" without specifying whether this is 24/365 or defining what support means. They rarely specify commitments in the event of the facility being fully occupied when another customer invokes.

Vendors usually rise to the challenge and pull all the stops out to support their clients - but the lack of SLAs exposes both vendors to unreasonable demands and customers to recovery failure.

Would it not be safer for all parties to spell out in a little more detail what the required service comprises and what its quality should be? Or are customers content to rely on vendor goodwill, and vendors to simply hope that unrealistic customer expectations will not lead to litigation?

- Copyright Andrew Hiles, Kingswell, 2000. Andrew Hiles is author of The Complete Guide to I.T. Service Level Agreements: Matching Service Quality to Business Needs; Business Continuity: Best Practices; and, Service Level Agreements: Winning a Competitive Edge for Support and Supply Services, and several other titles published by Rothstein Associates Inc.

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ON A LIGHTER NOTE...

So, who among us would admit to actually reading those shrink-wrap warranties, end-of-email disclaimers, or warnings on web pages before clicking I agree? The following disclaimer from Alan Oliphant appeared in an email posted to the CISACA-L mailing list and now I promise I'll read every one I come across. Thanks for clearing that up, Alan!

IMPORTANT: This email is intended for the use of the individual addressee(s) named above and may contain information that is confidential privileged or unsuitable for overly sensitive persons with low self-esteem, no sense of humour or irrational religious beliefs. If you are not the intended recipient, any dissemination, distribution or copying of this email is not authorised (either explicitly or implicitly) and constitutes an irritating social faux pas. Unless the word absquatulation has been used in its correct context somewhere other than in this warning, it does not have any

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legal or no grammatical use and may be ignored. No animals were harmed in the transmission of this email, although the kelpie next door is living on borrowed time, let me tell you. Those of you with an overwhelming fear of the unknown will be gratified to learn that there is no hidden message revealed by reading this warning backwards, so just ignore that Alert Notice from Microsoft. However, by pouring a complete circle of salt around yourself and your computer you can ensure that no harm befalls you and your pets. If you have received this email in error, please add some nutmeg and egg whites, whisk and place in a warm oven for 40 minutes.

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MITIGATING EMERGING HACKER THREATS

An excellent article which helps put recent hacker events in perspective, by Peter Mell and John Wack of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, may be found at <http://www.nist.gov/itl/lab/bulletns/jun00.htm>.

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RECOMMENDED READING

LIVING WITH HAZARDS, DEALING WITH DISASTERS:
AN INTRODUCTION TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
by William L. Waugh, Jr.

"This is the first concise introduction to emergency management, the emerging profession that deals with disasters from floods and earthquakes to terrorist attacks.

"Twenty case studies illustrate the handling of actual disasters including the Northridge Earthquake and the Oklahoma City Bombing. Discussion questions and guides to on-line information sources facilitate use of the book in the classroom and professional training programs."

- 2000, 248 pp. #DR462, \$50.00 (Hardcover edition)

THE DENNY'S STORY:
HOW A COMPANY IN CRISIS RESURRECTED ITS GOOD NAME
by Jim Adamson, CEO of Advantica Restaurant Group, Inc., parent company of Denny's
with Robert McNatt and Rosemary Bray McNatt

"Every organization can benefit from the insights and experiences reflected in this thought-provoking book. By honestly confronting the issue of racism in the context of American enterprise, Jim Adamson provides a responsible and convincing rationale for diversity and simply doing what's right for customers, shareholders, and employees." - Floyd Hall, Chairman, President, and CEO, KMart Corporation.

- 2000, 205 Pages. Order #DR460, \$25.00.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY: BEST PRACTICES
by Andrew Hiles, FBCI

This is the first book to provide a planning, development and implementation framework for business continuity based on the Ten Core Units of Competence jointly formulated by BCI and DRII.

"The Business Continuity Institute welcomes the publication of this new book by Andrew Hiles. There has been a lack of publications of this type to assist the newly appointed business continuity manager to the important discipline of Business Continuity Management. The knowledge contained in this book will support the individual's development and the successful implementation of BCM into organizations. - John Sharp, FIMgt, MCIM, Chief Executive Officer, The Business Continuity Institute.

"The Disaster Recovery Institute International (DRII) welcomes this new and comprehensive contribution to Business Continuity Management. It will provide an invaluable reference work for those new to the profession and a source of help to experienced practitioners." - Paul R. Thomas, Jr. and Benny D. Taylor, Vice-Chairman of the Board and Chairman of the Board, Disaster Recovery Institute International

- 2000, 303 pages (approx.). Order #DR470, \$169.00 +S/H.
Annual supplements are planned. The first supplement is free upon registration (when published).

As a special offer to Business Survival Newsletter readers, the book Disaster Recovery Testing: Exercising Your Contingency Plan (Philip Jan Rothstein, Editor), regularly \$65.00, is half price (\$32.50+S/H) if purchased together with Business Continuity: Best Practices (prepaid orders only, please).

COMET AND ASTEROID IMPACT HAZARDS ON A POPULATED EARTH
By John S. Lewis, University of Arizona, Tucson
Includes Computer Modeling Software on Diskette

"Of all the natural hazards facing Earth, impacts are the most dangerous. Unlike native hazards of Earth's surface, impacts know no size limit. Their effects can be devastating over the entire surface area of our planet. They are the only credible natural threat to human civilization. But impacts, especially those of large bodies, are both predictable and avoidable. The NEO population constitutes both an unprecedented hazard and an unparalleled opportunity. It is sometimes said that there is a fine line that separates a threat from an opportunity. The near-Earth asteroids present us with just this dilemma. They present us with an intelligence test of the highest order, with the highest possible stakes for the future of the human race."

- 1999, 142 pages plus diskette. Order #DR459, \$51.00.

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