

MINDING THE GAPS:

HOW AN IT/DR ASSESSMENT HELPED ONE COMPANY
IDENTIFY ITS VULNERABILITIES AND GAIN CLARITY



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A COMPANY SEEKING CLARITY

The company's IT leaders were confident about their technical recovery capability but had nagging doubts about their readiness in key areas.

The IT managers at this large Midwestern insurance and financial institution (over 2,000 employees, Standard & Poor's rating AA: Very Strong) had worked hard on the infrastructure and technical implementation of its IT/Disaster Recovery Program. Like most companies in their industry, they took IT/DR seriously. They had a sophisticated understanding of why resiliency in IT is important and what it takes to achieve. They were confident about the program they had built. However, they were also concerned they had gaps in key areas and wanted to validate that the overall program was capable and functional. They needed to understand where they stood.

ARRANGING FOR AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW

The company's culture was oriented toward doing things the right way. Guided by this, the IT team realized they needed to obtain clear insight into their program's strengths and weaknesses. They knew the best way to achieve this insight was by seeking a review of their IT situation and recovery capabilities by an independent third party possessing the knowledge, experience, and objectivity to see things clearly and accurately.

After issuing an RFP and evaluating several candidates, the company engaged MHA Consulting to conduct an independent IT/DR maturity assessment. The company chose MHA because of its deep experience in conducting IT assessments, the responsiveness of its proposal, and its industry-wide reputation for competence and integrity.

CONDUCTING THE REVIEW

MHA assigned two of its senior advisory consultants to the project. The consultants collaborated closely with the company's team in planning the engagement. Eventually, the MHA team traveled to the client's location and spent three days looking into every aspect of the company's IT/DR position. The consultants interviewed people from the IT program, observed IT staff at work, physically inspected the main data center and backup data center, studied the data center architecture diagrams, and reviewed the relevant policy and procedural documents. They also evaluated the company's testing program and alternate work site capability.

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ANALYZING THE DATA

After returning home, the MHA consultants analyzed the data they had gathered using MHA's proprietary BCMETRICS™ assessment tool, Compliance Confidence. The tool measured the company's IT/DR program against industry standards in nine key areas, including Data Backup and Offsite Storage; Recovery Strategies; Training and Awareness; and Pandemic Planning.

The MHA consultants documented their findings in a comprehensive Disaster Recovery Current State Assessment. The report contained written descriptions and numerical scores indicating the company's level of readiness across several important areas, graphics providing at-a-glance comprehension of key points, and a prioritized roadmap showing steps the company could take to improve the maturity and recoverability of its DR program moving forward.

MINDING THE GAPS, ACHIEVING CLARITY

When it received the report from MHA, the company obtained the clarity it had been looking for. The IT team was confirmed in its belief that the IT/DR position was in good shape overall in terms of recoverability. It gained insight into its data center situation through the report's finding that a colocation data center would be more cost-effective than the new data center it was constructing. (The report advised the company to review its data center strategy.)

Finally, the report confirmed the presence of the gaps the IT team had suspected and detailed how big they were. The company's remote work capability was identified as an area of special concern. The report found that the number of workstations at the company's alternate work site (approximately 150) was a fraction of the number that would be needed if the site came into use. The report explained how the gaps could be remediated, and the company said it plans to implement MHA's recommendations.

For this company, what mattered most was not any particular finding of the engagement but one overriding benefit it provided, that of clarity. The independent, third-party IT/DR assessment the company obtained validated its IT/DR position, identified areas needing improvements, and provided a roadmap explaining how to make those improvements—information that would allow it to meet the future with confidence.



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Schedule a Free Consultation:
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