Business continuity planning

There's a saying well-known to show business folks: "The show must go on." No matter what, actors must find a way to continue the performance. When disaster strikes, would your business be able to continue the show? Would there be 'business as usual', or would the performance grind to a halt?

In recent times, New Zealand has experienced several significant natural disasters that have had an impact on businesses – earthquakes, flooding and fire to name the obvious culprits. At UPS Power Solutions, we have recently been working on reviewing our own business continuity planning to ensure we can continue to service our customers whatever the circumstance. As part of this process we attended a workshop held by the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office and at that workshop the number one concern raised by businesses was the loss of power.
When infrastructure disruptions occur, such as extended power outages or the inability to access your place of business, company operations can endure significant challenges and potential financial losses. The good news is that there are some pro-active steps that you can take to help your business "get through"

Determine what you have

The first step in preparing a power failure response strategy is to identify and understand the electrical distribution system layout and design in the facility to be protected. An electrician or electrical engineer can assist you identify this information.

Determine what your organisation's mission critical requirements are for emergency power

Once the electrical power distribution system is documented and understood, the next step is to identify business critical equipment (e.g. LAN/WAN network devices, servers, VOIP phones, data storage devices, hospital theatres and air traffic control) that will require emergency power in the event of a power failure. Critical electrical power requirements, or 'loads' as they are often called, are usually identified as part of a business impact analysis and risk assessment.

Determine what type of emergency power your organisation should use

Typically, if the power failure lasts less than an hour an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) may be able to sustain power to your critical load – if properly engineered, sized and maintained. UPS Power Solutions Engineers are well equipped to assist you with designing the correct solution suitable for your specific critical loads.
If the power outage lists in excess of an hour backup generators would be needed however even with a backup generator a UPS is still required to prevent any power loss between loss of mains power and generator start-up.

Determine how you are going to ensure emergency power is available when required

This emergency power equipment needs to be appropriate for your company's critical loads, it needs to be installed and maintained correctly so that it does the job you need it to do when called upon. All UPS systems installed and maintained by UPS Power Solutions supported our client's critical loads exactly as they were designed to do in both the Christchurch earthquake of six years ago and last year's Kaikoura earthquake. The investment of our customers in the seismic fixing of this typically heavy equipment was certainly repaid as it all stayed upright and operational throughout these significant seismic events supporting their critical operations.

At UPS Power Solutions, we have designed our own IT infrastructure to ensure we continue to operate whatever the disruption, as we know it is important that we are available and contactable to support our customers 24 x 7. Our Business Continuity Plan encompasses alternate power supplies, automatic fail over systems to a non-affected branch and a DR facility.

Is your business as resilient as it could be? Will your 'show go on' in the face of adversity? Now is the time to review your critical power requirements and proactively plan to reduce the risk that power outages pose to your operations.

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