



Free Report: Disaster Recovery Case Study by HardSoft Systems Ltd.

Case Study: Frozen Out of The Workplace

True Story: February – Burlington, Ontario

During a very cold February day, a water pipe burst outside the 12 story building where one of our clients' has their offices. Initially it was no problem, there was water in the parking lot but with them being on the 6th floor, they were not too worried. However, when the city could not turn off the water at the first valve (it was frozen shut) or the second, then it took more time for the city to find the third valve.... enough time had passed that water, carrying gravel jammed the sump pump in the underground hydro vault that supplied the building. This filled up the vault shorting out the transformers and causing a blackout in the immediate area.

Some hours later, Hydro was restored to the area but not to the building. There were now 2 problems. One was the formerly sealed transformers actually had water inside them which meant they needed to be replaced. The second was that the water in the underground vault was freezing solid. Our client was given the bad news; the power was not going to be restored to the building anytime soon.

The situation was very interesting from a number of standpoints;

- Their office was physically OK, just inaccessible (no lights, elevators, heat, water etc) and temps were -20c in day and -32c at night.
- Approx 60% of interaction with their clients was via a portion of their web site which they hosted on site that was now down.
- They had no way to answer phones as their phone system was supplied by traditional telco copper and an onsite PBX.

The factors on their side were;

- A disaster recovery plan that had been developed cooperatively with Senior management and HardSoft Systems.
- Business interruption insurance.
- Committed, flexible staff.



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According to the disaster recovery plan, they had called HardSoft Systems as soon as the power first went out and so we were in the loop from the beginning. HardSoft Systems personnel got permission from the building management to get into the suites long enough to remove 2 critical workstations and 3 of the critical servers. We also brought switches, UPS's, monitors, keyboards, power bars etc from the HardSoft offices as it was bad enough carrying heavy servers down 6 flights of stairs. Our client had rented a meeting room at a nearby hotel for us to set up in so we set up a mini network in the conference room and were able to do the critical month end processing.

The Result:

By 9:00 am the next morning, we had a fully functional office in the 2 conference rooms, servers, 18 workstations (with all the applications the staff required for their work loaded and functional), 2 printers, 1 MFP, 2 business phones, etc were all connected, joined to the domain and fully able to support the staff in their jobs. HardSoft Systems personnel were on hand to help with any questions or problems. In addition HardSoft Systems personnel stayed in the hotel each night in case there were any issues after hours.

Days later, once Hydro replaced the transformers and once the building's services were restored and it had heated up, we were able to move the 3 critical servers and 2 workstations back into the offices quickly (much easier with elevators) and they were then back up and running.

Summary:

Having a disaster recovery plan in place along with business interruption insurance meant that this 89 year old business is still in business today. You want to partner with an IT company like HardSoft Systems that not only can help you develop a disaster recovery plan but has the experience with the successful execution of a disaster recovery plan. The effects of extreme weather is rapidly becoming the most common cause of business interruption so we need solid plans to deal with these interruptions to preserve the business you have worked so hard to build.

What is your Current Business Interruption, Disaster Recovery Position?

- ✓ How long would it take to get your business back to normal if your business was interrupted?
- ✓ Would having a disaster recovery plan give you peace of mind knowing you are protecting your business by being prepared?