

# 'BACK TO BUSINESS'

Is your company prepared for a disaster? If a flood, a fire, a power failure or sabotage were to hit you tomorrow, how would you pick up the pieces and carry on?

Disasters may be unlikely but they do happen and companies can pay a high human and financial cost if they haven't got an action plan to tackle the unthinkable. And we all know how impatient customers can be if there's any interruption to their service.

Being unprepared can easily make a drama out of a crisis. That's why business continuity needs to be at the top of any company's agenda.

A disaster doesn't just mean damage to property, negative publicity and the loss of key people and skills – either through leaving the company or because a disaster means they have nowhere to work. There's a real threat of going out of business altogether.

The prospect of such severe consequences, as well as the demands of customers, is making more and more companies ensure they have an appropriate business continuity plan. In fact, the Business Continuity Institute says the number of such plans communicated to insurers has nearly doubled in a year, from 16 per cent in 2002 to 29 per cent in 2003.

A key part of any business continuity strategy will involve locating the company's emergency control team – as well as other staff affected by the negative event – in suitable offices. And that's where Regus – the world's largest operator of fully serviced business centres and meeting rooms – really comes into its own; helping companies avoid losses by mitigating risk.

"We are the leading experts at disaster recovery," said Roger Jones, Regus's business continuity specialist for the UK's southern region. "When companies need our instant offices quickly, we're there – getting them up and running again in an office within an hour or 24 hours at the most."

Reserving professionally run, well-appointed offices for use in time of need means far less chaos when disaster strikes. And that, in turn, means fewer headaches for whoever is in charge of a

## David Ford, chief executive officer for Regus in the UK, explains why Regus's business continuity package should be part of every company's risk management strategy for dealing with a disaster.

company's business continuity, whether it's the facilities manager or a board member, such as the IT director.

At Regus's fingertips are around 400 business centres in some 50 countries, offering central locations in 200 cities, state-of-the-art IT and communication facilities, and a business-like, prestigious environment.

Regus not only offers the

nearest Regus centre and joining the queue. We give priority to people who have paid for a proper disaster recovery programme. Those who just turn up will have to pay a premium rate – if there's room available."

That's why Roger reckons the most far-thinking companies go for Regus's other disaster recovery options.

The second option is Regus's telephone answering service,

taking the maximum Regus has to offer – guaranteed workstations, also known as 'shadow space'.

"You pay a reservation fee and we guarantee that within an optioned centre or a cluster of centres, we will have the right amount of workstations set up within 24 hours," said Roger. "What differentiates us from other providers is that we really do guarantee the space – it's not first come, first served. And we offer a fully serviced environment with the very best offices – at key locations – with meeting rooms, videoconferencing, and secretarial services, supported by switchboard operations and security with CCTV. We'll drop everything to facilitate a client in trouble."

Reserving guaranteed hotdesks that are only used in the event of a disaster is not as expensive as might be expected, either. And companies only pay the usual rate when the office is being used.

"The ultimate business continuity plan is to have a dedicated office sitting waiting for you when disaster strikes," added Roger. "It can be primed for a disaster recovery team or the directors, with email set up so you can plug in and go. You can be up on the web, using broadband, in a matter of hours."

Many organisations have taken advantage of Regus's business continuity options since they were introduced two years ago. When the Citizen's Advice Bureau in Slough had a fire, for example, Regus set them up in the Nova building in the centre of the town and looked after them for two months while the offices were rebuilt.

Bureau director Zafar Ali told the Slough and South Bucks Express: "We are extremely proud we have managed to relocate and to be up and running after such a disaster." And he went on to thank Regus for providing an "extremely economic rate" to a non-profit-making group.

For more about Regus please visit [www.regus.com](http://www.regus.com). We are also exhibiting online at [www.business-continuity-online.com](http://www.business-continuity-online.com) and taking a stand at the Business Continuity Expo at Excel at London's Olympia on 9-10 March 2004.



office space itself but also takes care of the usual facilities nightmares – such as arranging for furniture, installing an IT infrastructure, telecommunications, management and security issues.

Regus offers three disaster recovery options. The first is for a company to schedule Regus as its first port of call when it has a problem with its own building. It contacts the nearest centre and books whatever room it needs. However, although all right in theory, Roger warns that it doesn't cover all the bases.

He explained: "Hoping that there's an office when it happens is not the best plan, because if everyone's building is affected in an area they'll all be going to the

which offers secure continuity of service to clients. Roger said: "You advertise a telephone number in the event of a disaster or arrange your phone numbers to be redirected to a Regus centre, so you have continuity of telephone answering.

"If the problem arises over a weekend, by 8.30am on Monday you can have arranged for a redirection, with our receptionists answering in your company name and passing calls through. We offer such a service day in, day out for Regus Virtual Office clients, who also use our addresses for letterheads and faxes."

The final option is aimed at companies that are really proactive and plan ahead by