



IMPROVING BUSINESS CONTINUITY **WITH A GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE, REMOTE WORKFORCE**



INTRODUCTION

Natural disasters often strike with little to no warning. The operational and economic impact of such disasters can be devastating and often irreversible. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), almost 40 percent of small businesses never reopen their doors after a disaster! Another 25 percent fail within the first year after facing a natural disaster. The primary factor for this failure rate, according to FEMA, is the business' under-preparedness, compounded by a lack of scope and education around necessary preventative measures.

According to the National Centers for Environmental Information, 2017 marked the most expensive year to date for national disasters in the United States. When it comes to the unpredictable nature of natural disasters, preparation continues to be the best defense. Organizations must leverage **'the calm before the storm'** approach and develop a business continuity plan that effectively addresses the key impacts of a natural disaster event before disaster strikes. By doing so businesses will be best prepared to bounce back in the wake of disaster.

Leveraging a remote workforce is an extremely effective business continuity planning strategy. Having remote employees will allow you to conduct your business by reducing your dependence on a physical site.

UTILIZE A DISTRIBUTED WORKFORCE

A centralized work force makes your business particularly vulnerable. Having all your employees in one location could prove disastrous during weather related events such as hurricanes, earthquakes, floods and snow storms. You could find yourself in a situation where employees are simply not able to come into work when these events strike. Similarly, you may have to face large scale absenteeism during the dreaded flu season. Such events not only cause disruptions to your operations but ultimately lead to lost revenue and unhappy customers. Your business will be far less vulnerable to weather events with a workforce that is distributed across a wide area across several states within the US, or even globally.

PROVIDE EMERGENCY SCALABILITY BY UTILIZING PART TIME EMPLOYEES

In addition to the geographic diversity that a remote work force provides, the absence of a commute also makes it a lot easier to hire part time employees. From a business continuity perspective, part time employees provide added capacity that can be used as needed. In the event of a large-scale outage, the part time employees can be assigned additional work hours.

Another advantage of part time employees is that it adds capacity to deal with localized events that usually have a short-term impact. Events such IT system failures, localized weather patterns and temporary power cuts may only impact a small group of employees and are often resolved within a few hours. However, this may cause an unforeseen volume spike that will have to be picked up by other members of the team while the issue is being worked on. The presence of part time employees will allow you to very quickly respond to such situations. Part timers who are working from home can not only continue to work through these events but can also fill in for the employees who are unable to get to the office.

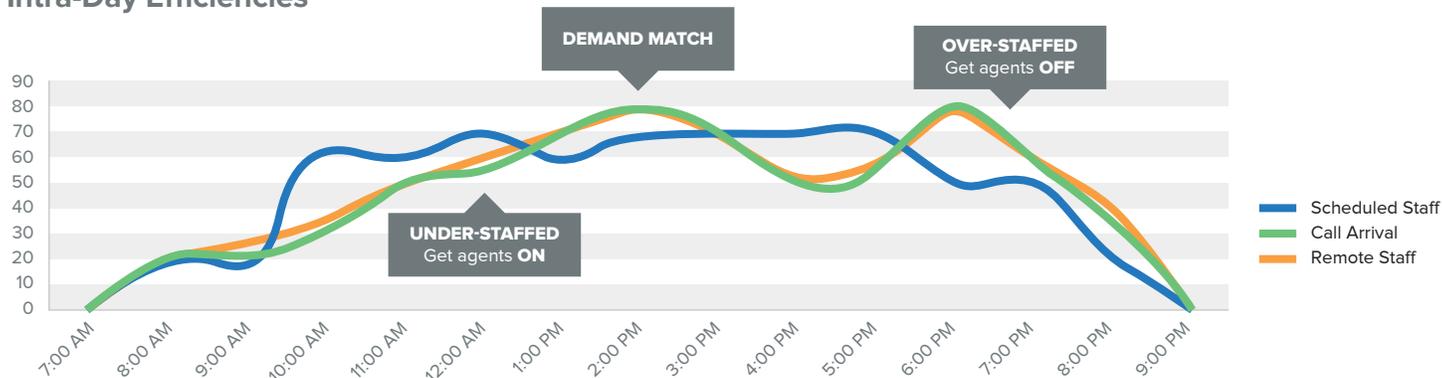


Leveraging a remote workforce is an extremely effective business continuity planning strategy.



Real time communication methods such as email blasts, text messaging and phone calls can be used to inform the team of an urgent need. Given that remote employees do not have to drive into an office, available members can quickly log on and provide the support needed. Once the volume normalizes, employees are once again informed and excess staff can be asked to log off. The graphic below shows how remote staffing levels can be increased or decreased to match the ups and downs in the daily volume.

Intra-Day Efficiencies



Remote staff can respond quickly and absorb 30 to 40% of unforeseen volume spikes or valleys

REDUCE COST OF OPERATION AND BUSINESS RISK

Many companies look to improve business continuity by increasing their physical foot print. In other words, have multiple teams and sites that back each other up. However, this approach can be extremely expensive. It is estimated that physical space for one employee can cost as much as \$700 each month in rent or lease expenses. This translates to over \$8,000 each year for every single employee! To put that into perspective, physical space for a 100-person team is likely to add almost \$1,000,000 to your operational cost every year. Additionally, this increases your financial exposure and consequently adds risk to your business. Any down turn in volume will leave you saddled with excess capacity that can be difficult to get rid of. A remote working solution will allow you to operate and even expand without requiring you too add space to your current physical footprint.

CONCLUSION

In today’s highly competitive market place companies simply cannot afford to have any disruptions to their operations. Such disruptions ultimately means that their customers are unable to receive the products or services that they have paid for and expect to use. This can cause irreparable damage to a business’s reputation that can be very difficult to repair. Utilizing a Remote Work Solution will strengthen your business continuity and improve your ability to keep the business running as seamlessly as possible with a minimal impact to both employee experience and customer experience.

Is your organization ready for a new model of process transformation that puts exceptional customer experiences first? For more information on how we can help you transform your process to optimize the customer experience, please visit us at www.sutherlandglobal.com, email us at sales@sutherlandglobal.com, or call 800-388-4557 ext.6123.

As a process transformation company, Sutherland rethinks and rebuilds processes for the digital age by combining the speed and insight of design thinking with the scale and accuracy of data analytics. We have been helping customers across industries from financial services to healthcare, achieve greater agility through transformed and automated customer experiences for over 30 years. Headquartered in Rochester, N.Y., Sutherland employs thousands of professionals spanning 20 countries around the world.