A Discussion on Business Continuity and babyTEL SIP/T.38 Trunking

What is Business Continuity?

"Business continuity is the activity performed by an organization to ensure that critical business functions will be available to customers, suppliers, regulators, and other entities that must have access to those functions. These activities include many daily chores such as project management, system backups, change control, and help desk. Business continuity is not something implemented at the time of a disaster; Business Continuity refers to those activities performed daily to maintain service, consistency, and recoverability." *Wikipedia*

What is Infrastructure Redundancy, Fail Over or Hot Standby?

When maintaining the critical functions of your business, Redundancy, Fail-Over and Hot Standby are styles or flavours of Business Continuity implementation, customized for your company.

Redundancy - Redundancy is the duplication of critical components or functions of a system with the intention of increasing reliability of the system, usually in the case of a backup or fail-safe. - *Wikipedia*

Fail-Over – Fail-over is the automatic switching to a redundant or standby computer server, system, hardware component or network upon the failure or abnormal termination of the previously active application, server, system, hardware component, or network. – *Wikipedia*

Hot Standby - A hot standby is used as a fail-over mechanism to provide reliability in system configurations. The hot standby is active and connected as part of a working system. When a key component fails, the hot standby is switched into operation. More generally, a hot standby can be used to refer to any device or system that is held in readiness to overcome an otherwise significant start-up delay. - *Wikipedia*

How do I choose a flavour of Business Continuity architecture?

A Business Continuity architecture is always customized to the distinct requirements of the company.

Well, we've haven't had any major power outages or internet disruptions in years, why should I even think about this Business Continuity?

You should be thinking about Business Continuity because the real question is not **if** a catastrophic event will happen, the question is **when it will happen,** how fast do you get your business up and

running. If you are not doing business, then you quickly may be out of business. The objective of Business Continuity is to design a system whereby your business functions are minimally affected by a catastrophic event.

Why is a SIP/T.38 Trunking service provider like babyTEL talking about Business Continuity?

One of the biggest differences between the SIP/T.38 Trunking world and the traditional telephony world (PRI, Analog lines) is that SIP/T.38 Trunking allows for simple, economic and elegant telephony solutions for Business Continuity. Traditional telephony assumed that telephony systems had to be centralized, making the re-direction of telephone calls very difficult and expensive.

With SIP/T.38 Trunking, IP-PBX's and fax servers can now have a dual architecture so that if one site is down, then another site can take over the responsibilities with minimal interruption to the company. This is the concept of High Availability. One example of this type of architecture is an active/active implementation.

What are some examples of a Business Continuity implementation?

babyTEL recommends two general architectures, depending on the synchronization abilities of the back end systems, IP PBX's or Fax Servers. Please note that all implementations are customized and there can always be a mix of implementations to serve the requirements of the business. Two examples are given below:

Active/Active – A financial services company has two locations in New York and San Francisco and wants to be able to send and receive faxes 24/7 through a fax server. Fax is considered an essential part of their business process. A fax server is placed in each location and the SIP/T.38 Trunking is set up so that both systems are receiving/sending fax calls based on the availability of the fax channels on each system. Effectively, all the fax server channels are part of the same "Hunt Group". This means that if one server fails, the other automatically carries the load until the failed server can be brought into production again. If this type of architecture was implemented with traditional telephony, the monthly cost would be prohibitive. With SIP/T.38 Trunking, this design has a low monthly cost and is automatically invoked as soon as there is a problem.

Active/Passive – A large healthcare facility is required to receive patient records by fax 24/7. Once again two fax servers would be used, one active one would be placed at the facility and another passive one at a data centre as backup. babyTEL SIP/T.38 Trunking would be set up so that if there was a failure in the active server, all the inbound faxes would automatically be directed to the fax server in the data centre. In this scenario, the backup is only used if necessary. In the traditional telephony world, this type of automated re-direction would be cost prohibitive. In the SIP/T.38 Trunking world, this is ordinary and insures the continuity of business processes.

Okay, I'm sold on this Business Continuity stuff, doesn't it cost an "arm and a leg"?

Traditionally it was the technical setup and monthly cost that made these architectures economically challenging. The traditional architecture required a PRI redundancy setup that is only technically possible when the dual sites are within a limited geographic distance from each other. Even then it is a complex setup that carriers are often unable to properly support.

Now with babyTEL SIP/T.38 Trunking, these implementations are not only cost effective, they allow you distribute or virtualize your architecture and lower your business risks. The new telephony network over the Internet allows multiple sites to be linked, regardless of the geographic distance. Virtualization, economic babyTEL SIP/T.38 services and high Internet availability reduces the cost to such a degree, that Business Continuity can now be part of the corporate business strategy.

How do I get started on Business Continuity?

The best place to start is by contacting your authorized babyTEL Agent. The babyTEL Agent can outline the high availability options and design a road map that insures that you have business continuity in the event that there is a disruption to your operation.

Contact Advantage Technologies to Learn More:

info@ATechnoloiges.com
(866) 730-1700
www.ATechnologies.com

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