A Customer Success from the Experts in Business-Critical Continuity™

Alliance Systems

Alliance Systems is a global leader in the design, development, manufacture, service and support of communications and computing solutions. Alliance supplies independent software vendors (ISVs), value added resellers (VARs), service providers and OEMs with complete communications and data solutions, including IP telephony systems.

Background

Alliance Systems President Rusty Cone learned the importance of business continuity planning from experience. Before joining Alliance, he helped his former company recover from a fire that destroyed one-third of its facility. The incident impressed upon Cone the importance of continuity planning. Once at Alliance, he made business continuity planning a priority. The first step in developing Alliance's business continuity plan was to conduct a risk assessment, which revealed vulnerabilities in the power protection system.

Case Summary

Location: Dallas

Products/Services:

- Liebert Npower UPS
- Liebert MiniMate2 precision air conditioning system

Critical Needs: Support business continuity plan by ensuring availability of critical voice and data network.

Results

- Elevated IT system availability and enhanced business continuity.
- Eliminated heat-related issues resulting from continued expansion.
- Created foundation and plan for future growth.

Liebert.

EMERSON™ Network Power

The Situation

Alliance's business continuity risk assessment identified events with the potential to disrupt business operations—severe weather, acts of terrorism, power outages, etc.—and rating their probability, potential impact and consequences.

A power outage was assigned a probability of "medium," with consequences that included loss of access to the data networks and phone systems, making it impossible for Alliance to conduct business and support customers.

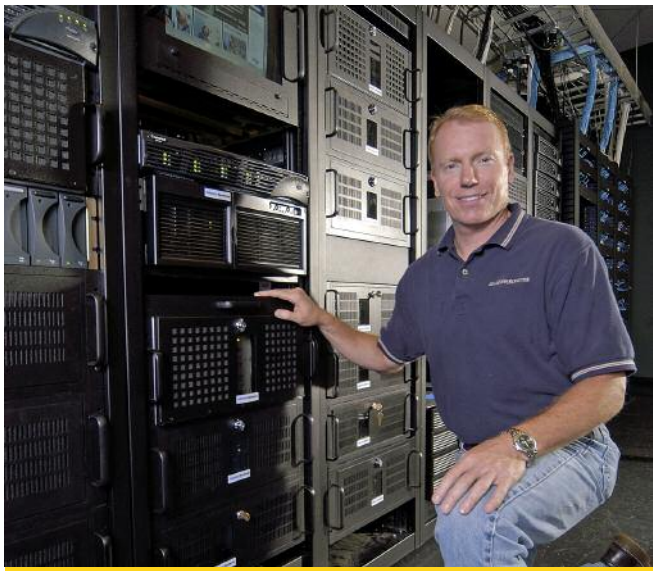
Following the assessment, an audit was conducted of existing business continuity systems and processes. Through the audit, Alliance identified two weaknesses in its power protection system: battery capacities were not sufficient to meet the requirements of the new IP telephony system, and the power system consisted of too many small UPS systems.

The company had added protection as it added server racks. This provided effective protection, but required that the company maintain seven UPSs. Liebert recommends room-scale protection when the number of racks in a room exceeds three.

In addition, the company found that the data center had outgrown the two-ton precision cooling system in place, putting equipment at risk of heat damage.

The Solution

"We've had a long relationship with Liebert, so we went to them first," Cone says. "We went through due diligence on alternatives, and were comfortable with the fact that Liebert was best-of-breed. We only wanted to work with the best."



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The first step was for consultants from local Liebert representative Tech Plan and Alliance management to review the company's priorities, future plans and availability needs as detailed in the business continuity plan. This helped determine the level of power protection and backup battery power required. The cost of downtime for Alliance was also considered during the planning process. Alliance estimated every hour of downtime cost the company $37,500, and this figure is increasing as the company's business grows.

Based on Alliance's current and projected needs, Liebert proposed three options. Alliance selected an approach that would allow the company to cost-effectively achieve five nines of availability—less than six minutes of downtime per year—while providing the flexibility to accommodate future growth.

The plan featured a room-based, three-phase Liebert Npower 50 kVA UPS with an extra battery pack to give the system a full hour of backup power.

Liebert Npower's online double conversion technology provides the highest level of protection available, isolating Alliance's equipment from the utility power source and ensuring battery power is not drained correcting day-to-day sags in utility power.

Additionally, with a mean-time-between-failure in excess of one million hours, the Liebert Npower was an appropriate choice for Alliance's high availability needs. Its small footprint conserves data center space, allowing for the growth Alliance predicts.

The Liebert Npower installation required little administration on the part of Alliance personnel, notes Todd Worthington, an Alliance desktop and network specialist. A few days after the installation, a representative from the service business of Emerson Network Power met with data center staff to go over the features of the new system.

Worthington and the rest of the Alliance IT team appreciate the system's straightforward operation and the bypass mode that allows for testing and maintenance without shutting down connected equipment.

A Liebert MiniMate2 environmental control system was also installed to meet the cooling requirements of the company's expanding data center. The Liebert MiniMate2 provides up to 8 tons of cooling in a space-saving, ceiling-mounted configuration.

The Results

Alliance Systems' business continuity plan has been enacted twice because of utility power outages, and both times the company experienced no downtime. In one case, the system was tested in a minute-long power outage. While Alliance personnel were working according to the business continuity plan—in the dark—the data and voice network transitioned from utility power to battery backup seamlessly.

"We could have bought something cheaper, but when you factor in the downtime and system support costs, cheaper usually doesn't turn out to be cheaper," Worthington says. "That's why we not only use Liebert, we recommend Liebert to our customers."

For more information on Liebert technology, visit **www.Liebert.com.**