

Serco: providing expertise for a client's disaster recovery audit

Goals of the project

- To provide specialist resource to support Serco in its provision of outsourced IT services to a major UK client.
- To provide additional, short-term resource for an independent audit of disaster recovery processes and procedure.
- To define processes and procedures that ensure network continuity in the event of a network disaster.
- To define mainframe requirements for optimum connectivity.
- To transfer specialist knowledge to the Serco team.

Executive Summary

Serco Solutions is part of the global services group, Serco, providing IT facilities management for UK-based organisations. In 2005, the group acquired ITNET, including taking over its contract to run the UK IT facilities for the UK operation of a major global food and beverage organisation.

Serco's contract includes conducting an annual audit and test of the disaster recovery (DR) process and procedures for the client, carried out at a time that they decree. At the time that the review was called for, Serco needed additional resource to deliver on its contractual commitment, so asked B & M to source a senior network specialist who could carry out the work. B & M was able to supply a consultant at short notice who had the right experience to perform

and document the review. An additional benefit was that he was also able to transfer valuable knowledge to the Serco team.

Helping Serco meet its contractual commitments

B & M first worked with ITNET before its acquisition by Serco in 2005, when the company asked B & M to supply a network specialist for a period of six months to help it meet its contractual commitments to its clients.

During this period, B & M was also asked to provide an additional resource to help Serco review a client's disaster recovery processes and procedures.

At very short notice, B & M was able to provide a senior network specialist with 35 years experience to perform the audit and produce the necessary report, working alongside the existing IT facilities management team as well as a team of support staff from IBM.

The specialist provided by B & M to conduct and document the review was able to contribute extensive knowledge and experience in working with network solutions for mainframe environments, particularly in the area of developing business continuity and disaster recovery processes in a variety of environments. He was also able to identify changes to elements within the mainframe environment which would provide optimum connectivity in case of a network event.

Technical environment

Serco's client runs z/OS on its IBM mainframe systems and uses the communications server to support the SNA and TCP/IP connections needed for its external clients. The technical requirement for the disaster recovery audit was to identify SNA or TCP/IP network related issues, to clarify the commands that these needed and to reduce the time of the Initial Program Load (IPL) for the entire mainframe.



The best practice for Best Practice

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The result: added value for the client

In conducting the test, the B & M specialist identified a number of issues in the existing DR plan and the accompanying documentation, which he captured in a detailed report. With the help of this report, Serco has repeated the test and has been able to resolve outstanding issues without external network support.

Paul Williams is the technical manager at Serco who was responsible for ensuring the delivery of the DR audit. He was very pleased with the resource provided and commented, "B & M provided an excellent service and responded quickly to the request for a network specialist. The resource that B & M supplied displayed excellent knowledge in a very difficult situation". He concluded, "The supplied resource demonstrated excellent network skills and provided excellent post network test documentation".

About Serco

Serco has grown to become one of the world's leading service companies by working in partnership with its customers and staff to manage change smoothly and positively - and pursues continuous improvement relentlessly. The company thinks innovatively to help governments improve services across many areas of public life - from justice to healthcare, education to defence.

Serco's work ranges from the management of facilities, projects and IT systems, through to the creation of entirely new businesses. This includes the financing, design and build of new facilities, including hospitals and transport systems, as well as their day-to-day operation. The company runs world-class scientific establishments, provides critical information to manage traffic, maintains buildings, operates railways and detains offenders.

About B & M

B & M has specialised in matching customers' needs and specialists' skills since 1992. We focus exclusively on providing consultancy and technical support for z/OS and Unix environments, including third-party systems software, open systems and networking connectivity. We add real value for HR and IT professionals by taking the time to understand their needs and applying best practice methods to deliver results.

For further information

Contact your Account Manager on
+44 (0)118 981 1880
or email: sales@bmeurope.com

B & M Europe Limited, Heath End House,
West Street, Tadley, RG26 3ST, UK
www.bmeurope.com

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