

Disaster Recovery Technology Showcase



Organization Profile

Seeds of Peace is an internationally recognized organization dedicated to empowering young leaders from regions of conflict with the leadership skills required to advance reconciliation and coexistence. Founded in 1993, its leadership network now encompasses over 3,500 youths from 25 countries.

“We would not be functioning ... at all ... without disaster recovery.”

“mindSHIFT was able to literally get everyone functioning the same as before -- which, in my mind, is just amazing.”

“Offsite data storage is invaluable. You cannot put a price on it.”

Disaster Recovery Gets Seeds of Peace Back in Business

Challenge

An underground steam pipe explosion on July 18, 2007 at 41st and Lexington Avenue near Grand Central Station in New York wreaked havoc on businesses in midtown. Unable to return to their office in the days following the blast, employees at Seeds of Peace did what dozens of other businesses did – they worked remotely from home and in temporary office space provided by one of their board members.

But a week later, the situation turned dire, as the city declared the office unsafe due to asbestos contamination. Not only was building access permanently denied, but the power was also shut off without notice – disabling Seeds of Peace’s four servers. Employees could not receive or send email or access any of their applications. The organization was essentially dead in the water, unable to do the non-profit work they were chartered to perform.

The business shutdown presented an immediate crisis: they did not have access to the list of 150 youths flying in from the Middle East for a special 3-week training camp on reconciliation and coexistence. Seeds of Peace employees needed the names and arrival information in order to meet them at the airport.

Solution

With operations grinding to a sudden halt, Fayth Centeno, Office and Human Resources Manager, acted quickly. She contacted mindSHIFT Technologies, the technology services firm that not only managed their IT infrastructure, but also performed nightly backups. In minutes, mindSHIFT transitioned Seeds of Peace from their now-dead Exchange server to hosted Exchange. Suddenly, employees were getting email again -- through Outlook Web Access initially, and then full Outlook access to hosted Exchange via RPC/HTTP.

Now Seeds of Peace needed access to their applications, including Raise’s Edge, the association’s mission-critical software for fundraising, contact management and relationship cultivation. Fayth again turned to mindSHIFT, this time for disaster recovery. What could mindSHIFT do to get Seeds of Peace doing business again?

mindSHIFT enacted its disaster recovery plan:

- First, the company ordered new servers for the organization; they arrived the next day (Friday).
- Next, that same day, mindSHIFT powered up and imaged the three new servers – a Domain Controller, Application Server, and Terminal Server – and set them up in mindSHIFT’s secure, enterprise-class Network Access Center.
- Finally, over the weekend, mindSHIFT engineers restored all 213GB of Seeds of Peace’s data and applications, as well as old Outlook email, calendars and contacts. The organization was up and running again on Monday, and they were able to meet the 150 youths flying in from the Middle East for leadership training.

The full recovery was accomplished in only 1-1/2 business days.

Results

Like most other organizations, executives at Seeds of Peace never dreamed that such a business interruption could occur. But they had the foresight to do nightly offsite data backup, versus doing tape backups onsite. This enabled the organization to continue doing business within days of a complete business shutdown. “The only difference is that people are accessing their email and applications via Terminal Services,” Fayth said.

Overall, Fayth says that Seeds of Peace “would not be functioning at all” without mindSHIFT’s disaster recovery service. “With all of our applications and information back online, the organization was able to do business again. And that’s amazing.”