

By Emphasizing BCP in the Establishment of Its Customer Support Center, NEC Fielding Ltd. Has Integrated Both Business Continuity (BC) and Disaster Recovery (DR) into Its Maintenance Services

In order to indicate how to deal with the issue of business continuity methodology in Japan the official document "Guidelines for Business Continuity" was issued by the Cabinet Office in August, 2005. In establishing a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) in the context of this document, the IT systems that are one of the essential infrastructures of modern society must be capable of a quick recovery and stable operations when unexpected events occur.

NEC Fielding Ltd., which provides IT system maintenance services as its core service considers that we can contribute effectively to the BCP of our clients by ensuring that their IT systems remain in continuous operation. This idea derives from countermeasures taken by us when the Great Hanshin Earthquake occurred. NEC has been implementing a business continuity plan (BCP) and disaster recovery (DR) procedures in the maintenance services market that is based on experience gained from solutions adopted following various earthquakes and disasters.

This paper introduces NEC's activities in the BCP field as an actual case study.

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Introduction

Various threats such as information leakage, external cyber attack (i.e. viruses, worms and hacking etc.), terrorism, fire damage, breakdown of facilities, natural disasters, etc. surround and affect our business environments. If we fail to apply countermeasures against such threats, various problems might result such as; losing company credit, degradation of the company image, a sales downturn, compensation claims for damages, etc. Especially in Japan, the threats against natural disaster such as earthquake and flooding contain severe risks. It is essential to have countermeasures in place to deal with the future occurrence of such threats.

As a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) case study, this paper introduces the application of BCP in IT maintenance services that have been developed based on our actual experiences.

Outline of Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

As described in the "BCP guidelines" issued by the Cabinet Office, the following procedures are commonly adopted in order to implement BCP when a disaster occurs.

- 1) Business operations priority decisions: A methodology to prevent important business operations from disruption or damage.
- 2) Predetermining recovery time: Allowable period for business operation to be disrupted.
- 3) Relocating to a secondary work site: Temporary business

operations in an unaffected area.

To achieve an effective Business Continuity (BC) methodology, it is necessary to establish a system serving the entire company by communicating with all relevant departments and sections with regard to the continuity of business operations and IT systems, and also a methodology of recovery from disaster (Disaster Recovery - DR). It is also required that executive managers and crisis management managers show strong leadership. Moreover, besides establishing a recovery system inside the company, it is important for achieving disaster recovery to select partners (key suppliers) in advance that can deal with the occurrence of unexpected events.

Large Scale Disaster Countermeasures for Maintenance Services

This section describes the actual countermeasures employed in the maintenance services against major disasters. These are provided for our client companies by NEC Fielding Ltd. as a partner in the IT systems recovery phase.

In order to provide maintenance services to our client companies all over Japan, we provide maintenance service facilities as shown in **Fig. 1**. When a natural disaster such as an earthquake occurs, we consider that the customer support center (CSC) is the most important element in the system to provide services for our clients to continue their business opera-

* "Business Continuity Guideline - Version 1" issued by Cabinet Office, August 2005.

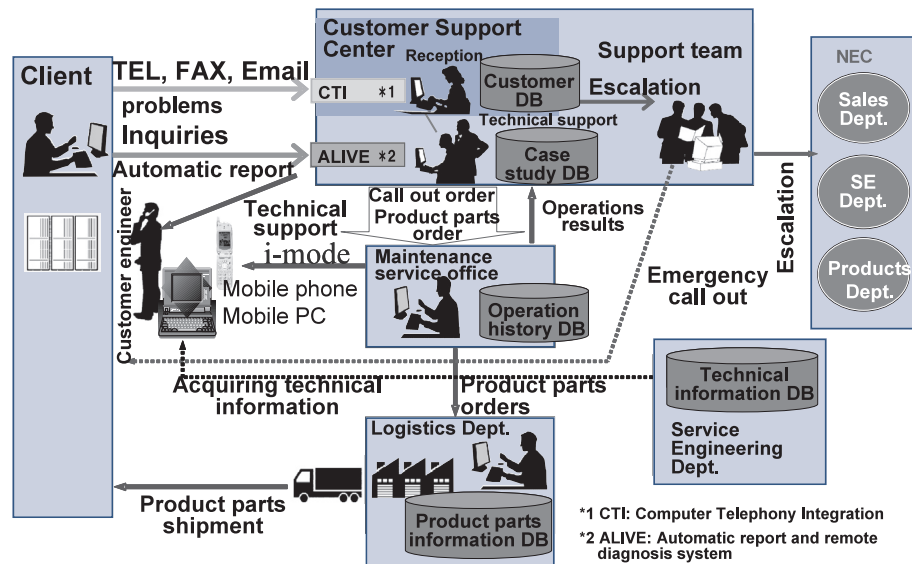


Fig. 1 Maintenance services formation.

tions and to recover from disaster disruptions. This is because the CSC is a section that receives direct calls from our clients. Therefore, our BCP has been set up based on CSC-focused considerations.

(1) Creating a Manual Is the First Step toward Achieving BCP

A manual indicating disaster countermeasure regulations and methods must be created in order to achieve BCP. The manual is updated by referring to simulation training exercises (twice a year) and to on-site experiences. It also defines the countermeasure levels (ie. A president calls for Disaster Management Dept. action when an earthquake with a Japanese intensity scale level of 6 or over occurs.) The roles of each department (Personal Affairs/Welfare, Information Systems, Engineering, Materials, Public Relations, etc.) involved in the disaster countermeasures are also defined.

(2) Monitoring and Call Tree Systems in Normal Business Operations

CSC is in operation 24 hours/365 days monitoring TV news and earthquake information homepages so as to be prepared for the occurrence of unexpected threats. Also, it is considered to be an important task for CSC to build a practical call tree system when any threat occurs.

(3) The Most Critical Concept in BC is the Disaster Plan

The Customer Support Center (CSC) is a critical section for providing continuous maintenance services to our clients. In order to prepare for disaster occurrence our CSC operations

are located in Tokyo and Osaka. As shown in **Fig. 2**, disaster countermeasures are provided for the IT systems used in these CSCs, such as server cluster configurations and data replication systems using remote replication functions between Tokyo and Osaka.

(4) The First Step to Achieving BC is to Confirm Staff Safety

An essential step for achieving BC is to confirm the safety of staff and partner companies. On normal days, it is important to update the call tree of staff and partner companies in order to verify the safety confirmation system so that once an unexpected event occurs, a quick action to confirm their safety is possible via their land line and mobile phone numbers, email addresses, web sites, etc.

(5) Sharing Information Will Facilitate Inter-Organizational Cooperation

It is necessary to have an information dispatch mechanism that can be shared by the entire company organization in order to carry out smooth and systematic organizational activities when an unexpected event occurs. We have our Web site on our Intranet server so that anyone can easily communicate any relevant real-time information. This Web site prepares a folder for people just to enter and transfer their files (any sort of Microsoft Office file is acceptable, such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint). No previous knowledge of homepage making is required.

(6) Quick Decisions Aid Recovery from Disruption

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- Replicating systems in East and West Japan to prevent systems disruption due to a disaster event
- Using an IP network for telephone communications
- Synchronizing the clients DB between the systems in East and West Japan

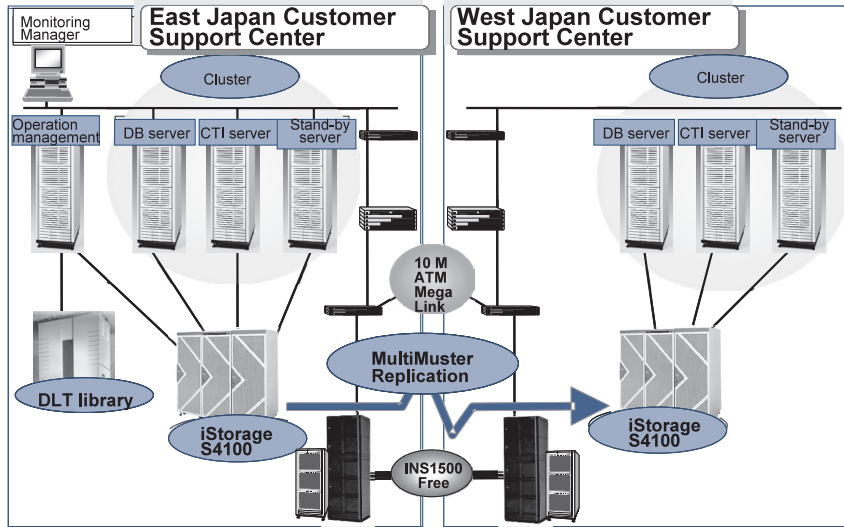


Fig. 2 The key to business continuity is disaster recovery countermeasures.

In order to achieve disaster recovery, a quick decision is essential. We employ TV conferencing systems to announce decisions to several offices in real time.

Conclusion

NEC Fielding aims to provide maintenance services that enable our clients to resume a part of their business operations within two days and to resume full business operations within three days of a disaster. In order to achieve effective BCP for our client companies our activities are being promoted in partnership with NEC.

For inquiries,
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