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Disaster Recovery IT Solutions in Hurricane-Prone Caribbean

Marcelo Oliveira, Director Datacenter, IT Infrastructure, and Continuity Solutions

If you had any doubts about the destructive power and intensity of hurricanes crossing the Caribbean, the 2017 storm season served as a stark reminder. Lives were lost, homes and businesses were devastated. One area also emerging as a source of concern to businesses and governments is the potential loss of national information systems that allow for business continuity - key assets such as information systems and especially data (financial, customer, product records, etc.).

As countries now add the restoration of IT infrastructure and information to the "rebuild list" of critical national assets, we must also consider how we as a region mitigate against the loss of critical data assets. A Disaster Recovery solution is one way we can tackle this issue head on while reducing the areas for rebuilding in the face of future hazards.

One option to address this is to expend significant capital costs to build out an in-house Business Continuity (BC) / Disaster Recovery (DR) solution. Given the significant costs and logistics, a more interesting proposition is however to move your organization's IT infrastructure to a financially robust and technically expert company.

Marcelo Oliveira, Director Datacenter, IT Infrastructure, and Continuity Solutions for C&W Communications comments on the advantages of this option.

He explains the process in three steps. "First, you will benefit from an IT environment that is run in accordance with international best practices, which is more secure and cost effective than an in-house cloud solution. Second, outsourcing to an expert provider brings added value to your organization since your IT staff can focus on enhancing processes to deliver timely and quality decision-making information rather than worrying about running backups, patching servers, or fixing problems to keep the infrastructure up and running. Third, your IT team can also work with internal clients, collaborating with them on how to leverage IT to innovate and create sustainable competitive advantage for your organization."

Marcelo also talked about the challenges in the approach. He said: "Migrating to the cloud is not an easy task. When migrating legacy applications to the public cloud, you will very likely have to adjust and reconfigure your applications to fit rigid public cloud standards. It is common knowledge that public cloud support is not the most friendly or available, unless, of course, you spend millions of dollars. If not

properly executed, public cloud solutions are likely to be more expensive. And with security being such a costly proposition, it's very often treated as an afterthought."

On the other hand, managed cloud service providers can take you by the hand and help you migrate to a flexible solution that allows you to "lift, shift, and drop" your applications onto the provider's cloud with minimal or no reconfiguration required.

Disaster Recovery solutions should also bring a lot more value to you than functioning as "insurance" where you pay month after month, and hope that you don't have to use it. Data in the Disaster Recovery environment generates no value as it sits inert waiting to be used in the event of a disaster. Your DR solution provider should be able to add incremental value by allowing the use of the secondary site as a source of resources for maintenance and other activities such as running DR data through machine learning tools, maximizing the utility of what would otherwise be idle data.

Therefore, given the region's vulnerability to disasters, you should be looking to migrate your IT environments to highly available and secure cloud IT solution managed by an expert. As the old adage goes, "it is better to be safe than sorry."

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