

CASE STUDY



Allen Interactions

Education, E-learning Minneapolis, MN

The Problem

Allen Interactions, a nation-wide developer of e-learning solutions, had been operating with what they assumed was an adequate business continuity and disaster recovery (BCDR) plan. Fortunately, they had the foresight to self-evaluate this plan and realized that what they had in place was not nearly enough to protect their business. Much of it had been patched together over time, with the result being incohesive and confusing. In the final analysis, they realized that their BCDR 'plan' was actually little more than a series of check-boxes that offered no real protection for their business, should their facilities or network become unavailable.

They needed a real BCDR plan that fit their business, and quickly.

With the need to implement a BCDR plan as soon as possible, they did what most of us would do – search google for a template. Unfortunately, what they found either did not match their business model or was far too time consuming to be worthwhile. Being a developer of e-learning solutions, Allen Interactions had the technological savvy to recognize they should turn to experts rather than try to develop a BCDR plan themselves.

"We understood the importance of having an up-to-date and easy to follow continuity plan, which is why we reached out to ACOG for their assistance with updating ours. We had an entire team at ACOG helping us."

Zarir Erani
President, Allen Interactions

The Solution

For Allen Interactions, the objective of developing and implementing a new BCDR plan was simple: They needed to know it could guarantee a rapid return to business operations after any disruption. After a kickoff discovery meeting, they gave ACOG the freedom to essentially rewrite their entire plan, and ACOG kept Allen Interactions closely involved in the process every step of the way. First off was a comprehensive review of the existing BCDR protocols, and then meetings to define the exact requirements of any recovery. The final plan was then presented to Allen Interactions for review and revisions.

"The process was simple and straightforward. They asked all the right questions, and then went to work on updating the plan with their expertise and knowledge of our network."

A key strategy of ACOG's disaster recovery and business continuity planning is to ensure their clients' ability to work remotely – to be able to access data and perform tasks even when separated from their physical office and network infrastructure. For Allen Interactions, their remote workflow plan also had to not deviate too greatly from their already existing workflow, but instead supplement and support it. This involved setting up a cloud server and remote desktop solution, getting Allen Interactions onto remote-capable platforms like Office 365 teams, and setting up their VPN and firewall for security.

The Results

Allen Interactions' BCDR solution brought unexpected benefits when the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted everyone's normal routines. With a remote-working ecosystem already implemented, they were able to maintain their business operations and simultaneously protect their workforce while social distancing. This has boosted their overall competitiveness, and put them in a better position after the return of normal economic activity.

The productivity and security of their cloud ecosystem has enabled Allen Interactions to scale efficiently, and they have expanded their business without the IT headaches typical of a mid-size growing firm.

"The result was a simple to follow yet effective plan that we were able to share with our entire company, and have since been able to test out with the restrictions put in place due to COVID-19. We appreciate the knowledgeable staff that ACOG has and their ability to help us with not only day-to-day needs but long term planning."



About Allen Interactions

Founded in 1993, Allen Interactions creates technology-enabled custom learning solutions for many of the world's leading organizations. Based in Minneapolis, they have grown rapidly and now have offices throughout the United States. Allen Interactions have partnered with a COUPLE of GURUS since 2012.