

Testing Disaster Readiness for Our Customers' Protection

Disaster simulation demonstrates that Quintiles will recover quickly and ensure continuity for ongoing customer trials.

Businesses around the globe have sharpened their focus on planning for the possibility that events — such as critical computer system failures or natural disasters — could suddenly interrupt normal operations. At Quintiles, our customers entrust to us clinical trial data with tremendous market and scientific value, and those assets must be recoverable after any such event. Customers also rely on us to plan for clinical trial continuity, with the ability to quickly overcome unforeseen circumstances in order to meet their clinical development timelines.

To meet these critical customer expectations, Quintiles has proactively implemented a comprehensive business continuity planning and IT disaster recovery (BCP/IT DR) program designed to prepare each of our sites for disruptive events and ensure that critical services, functions and applications would be restored as quickly as possible.

Recently, as part of disaster planning due diligence, we ran an unannounced test of those BCP/IT DR procedures. The simulated event would be a fire at the Quintiles Clinical Data Management facility in Bloemfontein, South Africa.



Putting Preparation to the Test

On the day of the test, Theo Erasmus, Quintiles Vice President of Global Data Management for Africa, unveiled a presentation setting up the scenario of a burning building, potentially putting the customer's trial data in jeopardy, with the IT and network links down. "Basically, we told our staff: 'You are standing in the parking lot. The facility is destroyed. What do you do now?'"

The Quintiles South Africa team went into immediate action, executing the plans that had been designed for just such a situation. At the conclusion of the exercise, the response procedures — enumerated in detailed checklists — had been effectively followed. Critical two-way communications between Quintiles and the

customer's management was established swiftly. Valuable trial data had been accounted for. Employee safety was ensured. Access to backup off-site IT capabilities was accomplished. Lessons learned were shared and modifications were made to improve the plan.

"The customer's staff was pleased with the way the test turned out," said Cheryl Murphy, Quintiles Vice President, Global Operations Head. "They were complimentary of our professional manner, knowledge and experience in drafting and executing these types of tests."

Continuous Testing and Feedback

The test was a success, but with business continuity planning and IT disaster recovery the learning never stops. Lessons from the Bloemfontein simulation have been fed back into further enhancements of the Quintiles global BCP/IT DR planning and testing procedures. In addition to the direct assurance gained in this instance, other customers will also benefit.

"Quintiles does business continuity planning for every one of our 121 locations around the world," said Gary Hull, Global IT Disaster Recovery Manager. "Disaster recovery plans are tested annually. We work very hard on these exercises. It takes two to three weeks of planning to do just a table-top test."

Technology Deployments Enhance Disaster Recovery

Quintiles has put great effort into being at the forefront of our industry in both strategic planning and technology deployment for BCP/IT DR. Our use of Virtual Private Networking enables authorized users to securely connect to our IT infrastructure from anywhere in the world — so study data access is not site-specific. Backup data storage is important as well. Quintiles has deployed leading-edge data mirroring and virtual server technologies to further ensure the availability of our customers' trial data.

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In November 2008, Quintiles staff in Mumbai, India had their business continuity readiness put to the test in a real situation, rather than a simulation. Refinements based on the earlier South Africa exercise significantly contributed to their ability to respond effectively when the Mumbai terror attacks occurred.

Quintiles has built a comprehensive, global BCP/IT DR program with a scope that is industry leading. Always based on best practices, our processes continue to evolve as these concerns become increasingly important to us and our customers. Please contact Quintiles to find out more about how our planning can protect your trial data and provide seamless business continuity for your clinical trials.



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