

The Client



Our client is an established independent online fashion retailer selling designer clothes principally for the export market. This is a medium sized business with approximately 200 staff, stocking over 250 brands and selling to customers in more than 100 countries.

A successful and fast growing organisation, their insurer recognised it was exposed to a high business interruption claim if there was a significant IT failure or stock loss. The company itself recognised that it does not take much to lose market share and reputation having seen examples of others in the industry fail in the face of adversity.

It was clear that the company was at a point in its evolution when measures needed to be put in place to help safeguard its credibility with customers and suppliers. Understanding the impacts of potential threats to the continuity of the business was essential to ensure appropriate risk controls could be implemented.

The Challenge

There were two principal challenges to address in this business continuity project: location and website. The client currently operates from a multi-unit single site location encompassing all capabilities, including head office and warehouse facilities. As a result, key stock lines could be vulnerable to a localised incident, e.g. a fire or other denial of access, which could impact upon the client's ability to maintain its next day delivery service – a key element of the customer experience. There was a reliance on an always-on web presence to advertise products and process customers' orders, therefore any reduction in web capability could impact sales revenue.

The client had not considered business continuity planning as such and although there were a number of contingencies and alternative strategies available to help maintain the sales capability, these had not been clearly defined and documented as a plan of action. Teed was engaged to help take the client through the relevant stages of business impact analysis, recovery strategy development through to documenting and validating a Business Continuity Plan.

The Solution

At the outset of the project, Teed's consultant visited the client to assess current exposures that would result in a loss of resource, for example, premises, people, IT and stock. A walk around of the site was also necessary to identify how a denial of access caused by an incident out of the client's control could impact them, this showed only a single entry route to the site which if blocked could affect access and ability to despatch orders.

The business continuity analysis and review identified that hard work had already been done to manage risks and a focus on identifying critical resource dependencies helped to highlight further risk mitigation improvements, for example, putting in place a secondary access route and reducing current reliance on a single telecoms exchange.

In terms of the website, although managed by a professional third party data centre, it was recognised that the service could be disrupted by incidents, for example, loss of the provider, a physical event, data corruption or cyber attack. A solution was agreed whereby a completely independent contingency website capability would be established that could take over customer sales and enable the client to continue to meet its objectives.

Once the Business Continuity Plan was drafted, this was validated through a table top business continuity exercise for the incident management team. This also helped individuals to understand their pre- and post-incident responsibilities.

The Result

Our client is confident that being in a single location will not jeopardise the business and improvements have been made to maintain sales capability the event of a disruptive situation. The leadership team and business owners recognise the ongoing importance of business continuity management and are now more confident in their ability to deal with events.

The insurer is satisfied that the Business Continuity Plan, backed up by effective solutions and mitigation measures, will reduce their exposure to the consequential losses of an incident.

Teed's consultant was able to draw upon experience gained from helping similar organisations enabling the client to define priorities and establish contingences which will put them in a better place to manage an adverse situation effectively.