RIGHTSIZING DISASTER RECOVERY UNDER FINANCIAL PRESSURE

GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS GROUP

Recovery Tiering and Business Impact Analysis

To many of us, it seems like very little is the way it was a short time ago.

At the end of 2019, for many organizations, spend on Disaster Recovery was planned to increase.[1] At this writing (Autumn 2020), most organizations are in significant cost-cutting mode.

What has **not** changed? The continuing decrease in tolerance for downtime of any sort, as well as in recovery time and recovery point objectives (RTOs and RPOs). [2]

MAKING THE CASE FOR DISASTER RECOVERY

The perspective from outside the IT organization is frequently that disaster recovery is seen as "the insurance policy that we can't afford," ranking with training and discretionary travel as a target for cost cutting.

Risk management, business continuity, and IT professionals know that DR is required. But it's our responsibility to

- Communicate its value, while
- Ensuring that we are in fact doing the best job we can of solution design.

And we need to communicate that value in terms that the business understands. There are three common priorities shared by most businesses for IT investment:

- Revenue
- Cost, or efficiency
- Risk Mitigation

This is the context we need when communicating to the business.

....AND FOR DR TO BE PROVIDED COST-EFFICIENTLY

Gartner lists several DR related items on a recently published list of cost-cutting suggestions. These include the use of automation and tools, and consideration of both Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS) and public cloud providers as more economical alternatives.

The first of the items they list is the **rightsizing of recovery time targets**, which is done through the **business impact analysis**. This process is required both to **understand** what we are protecting and to **articulate** the risk we are mitigating.

Stated plainly: we can't be sure that we've done our best in solution design unless we've done the work to properly define our requirements. Otherwise, we've built and paid for insurance without determining the value of what we're protecting.

THREE CONSIDERATIONS:

1. You're probably going to need Disaster Recovery.

In a recent Gartner survey, 76% of respondents reported an incident requiring a DR plan within the past two years, with over half reporting at least two incidents (an average of 2.6 incidents per respondent). [3]

2. You're probably under significant cost pressure.

DR is significant: half of organizations surveyed expected to spend at least 7% of their 2020 IT budget on DR, compared to less than one-third a year ago.

3. If you don't have a thorough BIA, you can likely do better.

Even today, Gartner estimates 70% of organizations are "making disaster recovery decisions without any business-aligned data points, or on the basis of an outdated business impact analysis (BIA)." [4] Gartner also tells us that at least 24% of organizations target a recovery time objective (RTO) of one hour or less for all tiers of IT services. [5]

Unless you're a small organization, the last fact alone provides an opportunity to look deeper. Recovery costs are driven first and foremost by recovery time and recovery point objectives. Estimates vary, but the relationship between slow recovery items and near-zero RTOs can be the difference between x and 9x.

The absence of a BIA leads to only two possible outcomes.

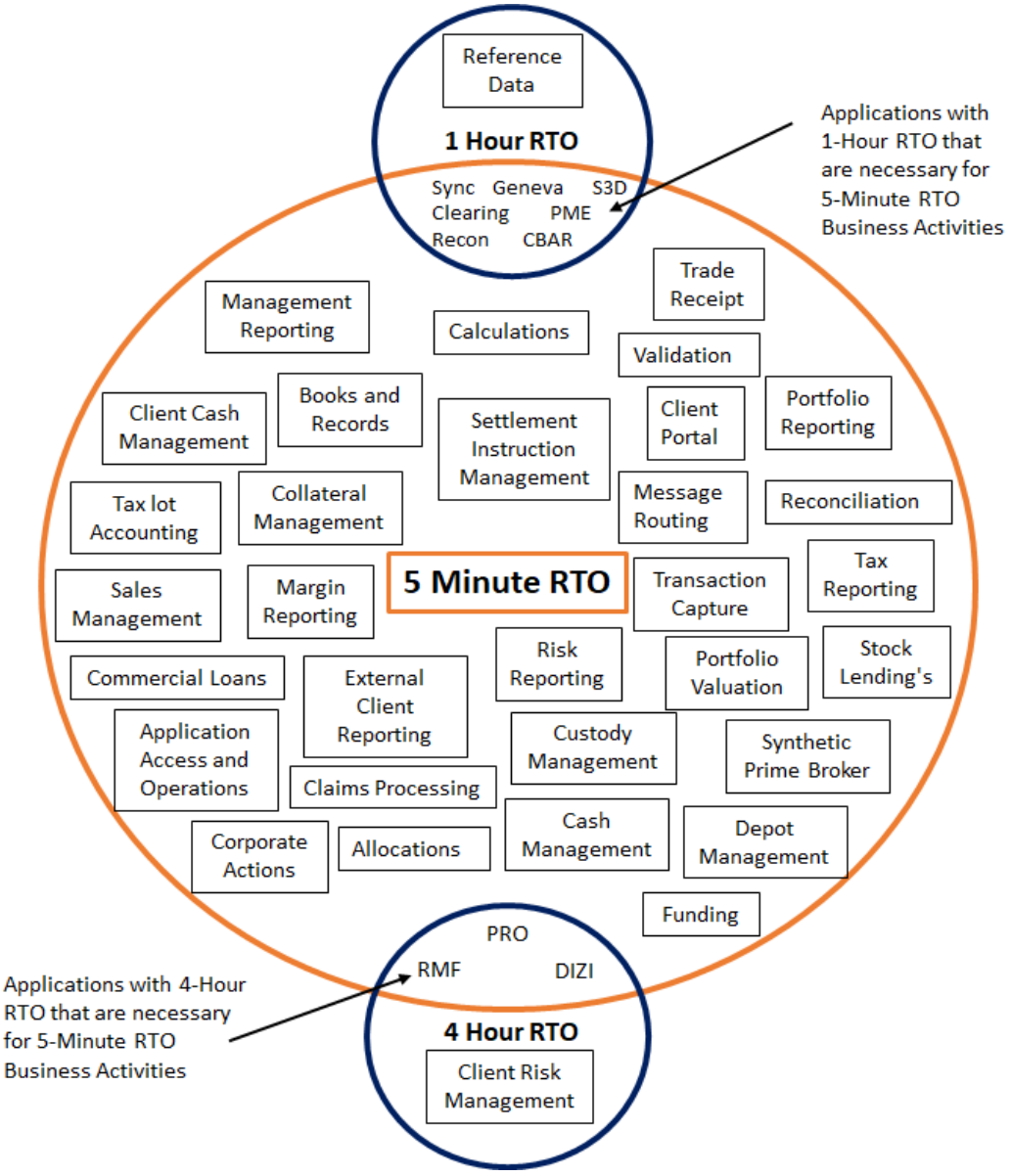
- We over-invest in the solution, sub-optimizing funds that could be devoted to revenue-generating projects, or could enhance the client experience, or improve productivity.
- We under-protect the business.

TRUE RECOVERY PREPARATION REQUIRES AN UNDERSTANDING OF ALL INTERRELATIONSHIPS AMONG APPLICATIONS, DATABASES AND SERVICES.

A large brokerage firm had not done the work to validate that the Recovery Time Objectives (RTOs) for their mission critical applications were supported by the applications, databases and services on which they depend. GTSG performed the analysis and identified

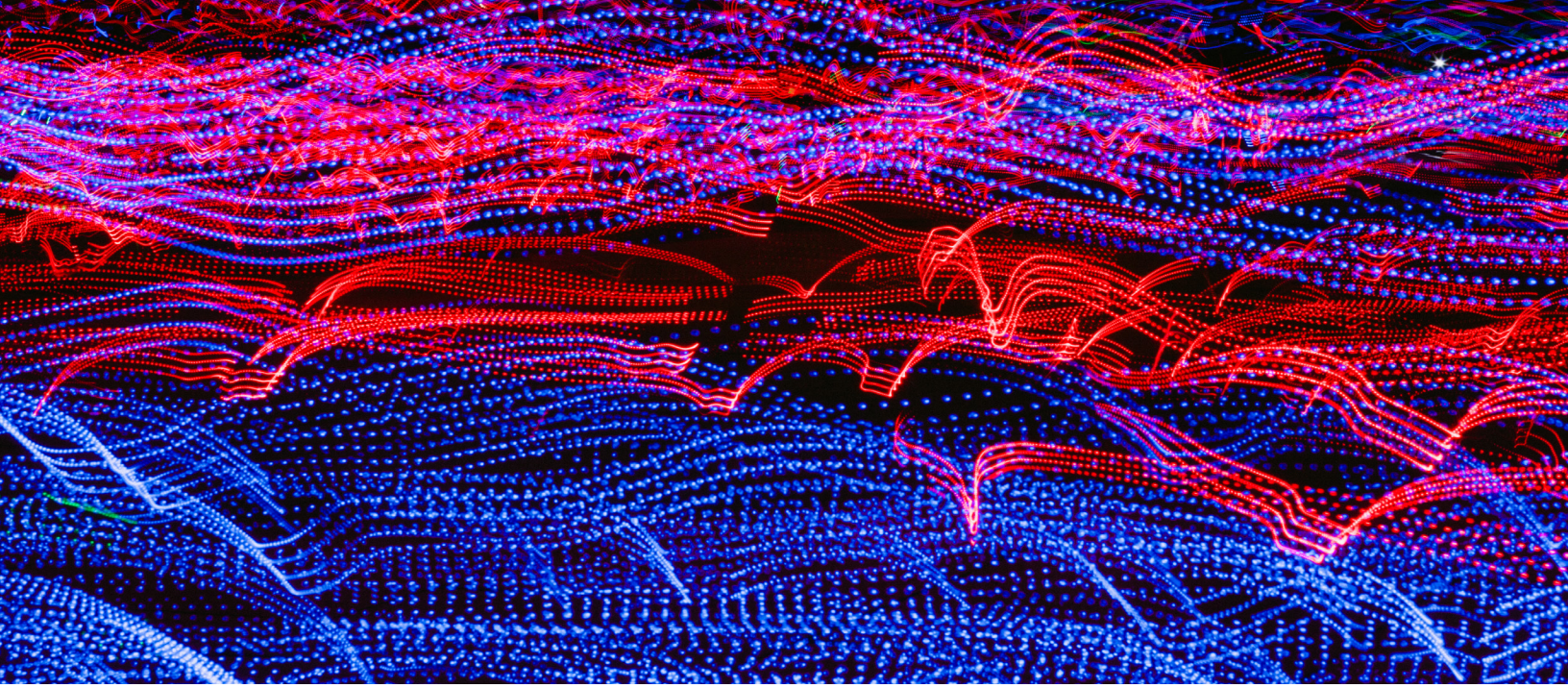
- **10 major applications with a 1-Hour RTO, and**
- **3 major applications with 4-Hour RTOs**

that were necessary for 5-Minute RTO Business Activities.



From this analysis, the client built a remediation plan which

- **Obtained the investment to protect line of business-defined 5 minute RTO requirements, and**
- **avoided costly over-investment in to other applications, databases and services.**



HYBRID COMPLEXITY

The complexity of today's IT adds to the difficulty of requirements definition. Not only on-prem or co-located, but cloud applications and databases must all be understood- SaaS, PaaS and IaaS. In the past, with on-prem data centers hosting the majority of workload, a straightforward configuration of "two and a bunker" was the answer for many. Today, there is workload on-prem, in colocation, in various SaaS, PaaS and IaaS instances, and at the edge.

Gartner ranked the 'impact of hybrid complexity on DR' as #2 in research entitled "Top Ten Trends Impacting Infrastructure & Operations in 2020."

Recent poll respondents called out "systems of innovation" as more likely to operate without adequate protection than legacy "systems of record." These newer systems are more likely to operate on less familiar architectures, and in the cloud.

Consequently, Gartner cautions the organization against relying upon simplistic, legacy DR plans, and also to engineer for resilience when recovering to the public cloud, which has had its own well publicized availability challenges.

SaaS

Worth noting:

- There is no “standard” RTO or RPO among the wide variety of SaaS applications. In fact, most express their availability standards in terms of downtime per year.
- If we don’t ask, we are not likely to know the provider’s disaster recovery plans or their success in executing against them.
- We need to consider both business and regulatory compliance when determining these backup and recovery requirements.

Gartner assumes that through 2023, more than 50% of organizations that do not account for SaaS application disaster recovery (DR) requirements will suffer damaging downtime or unrecoverable data loss.

Cloud for Disaster Recovery

This is a growing area of importance: Gartner assumes that by 2023, at least 50% of commodity-server workloads still hosted in the data center will use public cloud for disaster recovery.

While cloud DR costs can represent an attractive cost savings opportunity, Gartner still advises that slow recovery RTOs and RPOs are a better fit for the cloud than rapid recovery targets of minutes or seconds.

Recall the diagram on page 5: a proper understanding of application dependency becomes absolutely essential to our ability to capitalize on this cost savings opportunity.

Exercise and Test Need to be Regular and Real

Whether you’re recovering internally, through a DRaaS provider or both, it is essential that service recovery be tested against the threats identified by Risk Management or Business Continuity – on a schedule that is consistent with the criticality the business assigns to the workload.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT LEVERAGE POINT DRIVING COST

There's an old manufacturing adage that at least 70-80% of the ultimate cost of a product is determined at the point of design. Only the remaining 20-30% can be impacted by subsequent cost actions. For disaster recovery costs, the BIA is the linchpin for analogous reasons.

The biggest leverage point anyone has in balancing disaster recovery investment with properly-planned protection is recovery tiering. There's no shortcut if you truly want to know that your investment decisions are supported by the facts.

Once you understand the picture, as with the client illustration we provided earlier, you can build a gap analysis to compare business requirements against current reality and identify the effort and costs to remediate.

From there, you can execute – or not – with the full support of the risk management and business continuity professionals who establish the parameters in which we operate.

This results in improved recoverability of those applications which require it – and appropriate adjustments to the DR investment in other applications.

Again, Gartner tells us that one-fourth of all organizations have a single RTO. With near certainty, GTSG believes that we can save those organizations money

If you've read this far and you've concluded that a BIA would help you either to save money or do a better job of protecting service delivery, let us know.

GTSG is now, and will remain, technology neutral and 100% independent: we will not take one dollar of commissions from any provider of any product or service for any recommendation we make to you. You'll know that our advice to you is based solely on what's best for your efforts to mitigate risk in a cost-effective fashion.

GTSG CAN HELP.

1. **Planning and Analysis** whether your business impact analysis, a risk assessment and gap analysis, or your remediation plan
2. **Vendor Analysis and Selection** sorting through competing claims and getting to the bottom line of what SLA you can expect
3. **Disaster Recovery Plan** both creation and testing
4. **Governance and Program Management**, which are core competencies of ours

Notes:

[1] *Gartner, "Survey Analysis: IT Disaster Recovery Trends and Benchmarks", published 30 April 2020*

[2] *Ibid*

[3] *Ibid*

[4] *Gartner, "Market Guide for Disaster Recovery as a Service," published 25 June 2020*

[5] *Gartner, "Survey Analysis: IT Disaster Recovery Trends and Benchmarks", published 30 April 2020*

With us, you'll get:

INDEPENDENCE
when we consult to you, we are not resellers of any product or service. When we make a recommendation, you'll not spend any time guessing why.

RISK MITIGATION
experience dating back to changes in thinking on availability post 9/11; vision to help major firms support "always-on" operations today"; structured methods which codify what we've learned.

AN EASY ENTRY POINT
whether it's a discussion or a workshop.

Write us at:
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Thank you.

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HYBRID CLOUD STRATEGY AND MIGRATION

Strategic Approach
- Business case development
- Transition planning
- Technical modeling
- Non-disruptive execution

Application Analysis Methodology and Tools
- Decomposition
- Affinities
- Wave planning

Project Leadership

Implementation Subject Matter Expertise

INFRASTRUCTURE TRANSFORMATION

Transition Services
- Insourcing/Outsourcing
- Knowledge transfer and interim support
- Application migration
- Service management design

Disaster Recovery Design and Implementation

High Availability Design and Implementation

Application Assessment and Deployment
- Reference Architecture
- Infrastructure Alternatives/Recommendations
- Implementation/Migration

INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT SERVICES

Managed Services
- Multi-platform including DB & MW
- Service-level based or FTE-based
- Architecture, administration, programming, systems management
- Remote or Onsite

Project Based Services
- Platform upgrades
- Workload migrations
- Implementation services
- Consulting and Assessment (performance, DR, HA.)
- Project Management

INFRASTRUCTURE OPTIMIZATION

Architecture Assessment and Design

Server Virtualization/Consolidation

Storage Optimization

Data life-cycle management
- Tiering
- Standardization/Automation

Application Decomposition Application

Re-design/Remediation Performance

Management and Tuning Latency

Analysis and Consulting