

DRaaS enables near-zero downtime target for media software company

Learn how STRATA®'s gradual foray into disaster recovery and business continuity solutions enables it to meet customer expectations and protect mission-critical systems and applications.

profile

Owned by Comcast, Chicago-based STRATA builds and maintains media software that empowers clients to sell and efficiently purchase all media types, including cable, broadcast, newspaper, radio, outdoor and digital advertising mediums. With a client base of over 1,000 agencies nationally, STRATA has transformed the way advertisements are placed and tracked, adding a new level of transparency to campaigns. On average, over \$50 billion in advertising dollars flow through STRATA systems each year.

a step by step approach to disaster recovery

Like many organizations, STRATA did not have an effective disaster recovery (DR) plan in place. The company started out developing and selling software through a typical on premise business model where the software sat on the customer's hardware and was supported by STRATA's support team for any issues that arose. As with many technologies, the company's software improved over the years, transforming into a number of websites and services that today enable two different client sides—the buying side and the selling side—to talk to each other.

STRATA's services include enabling customers to receive proposals from other customers, invoicing, delivery and other services. Initially, the company provided these services on servers that ran in a remote office. However, when a thunderstorm rolled through, a power outage took out the sites. That event triggered an idea to move STRATA's servers to the corporate office in Chicago in the belief they would be more secure. That led to the possibility of having a big play data center, which in turn led to the need for a DR plan.



profile

- ▶ SIZE: SMB
- ▶ INDUSTRY: Media
- ▶ TYPE: Software Development
- ▶ APPLICATION: Disaster Recovery
- ▶ HEAD OFFICE: Illinois, USA

challenges

- ▶ Protecting data and systems
- ▶ Meeting customers' expectations
- ▶ Keeping costs down
- ▶ Ability to scale for future growth

benefits

- ▶ Near-zero recovery time
- ▶ Easily scalable as the company grows
- ▶ Cost-effective
- ▶ Peace of mind

STRATA's choice of iland as its cloud-based DR provider came down to two reasons. Mike Dehler, STRATA VP comments, "One of them was because we were initially doing SAN replication which iland supports so it was a really easy way to get up and running, because we could just failover to iland's SAN infrastructure."

Secondly, STRATA was able to use iland for standby resources, allowing the software provider to get its feet wet with a DR plan at a reasonable cost. As Dehler says, "It was a good way to try out disaster recovery because we didn't have to make an outlay for equipment. iland has let us gradually get to where we are today."

The catalyst for real change, however, came in the form of Superstorm Sandy. Although STRATA wasn't a direct victim of the storm, the disaster opened the company's eyes as to what could happen to a business without a comprehensive and effective DR plan in place.

STRATA's DR plan today

Since implementing the initial disaster recovery plan, STRATA has gone further, implementing a solution that allows disaster recovery self-activation and also enables the organization to self-test its plan at any time.

Today, the DR solution protects many machines and the company has completed a number of successful tests – something that iland strongly encourages. Dehler confirms, "The tests have consistently achieved a near-zero RTO and it gives us peace of mind to know it's there should a real disaster occur."

The traditional alternative to outsourcing disaster recovery is doing it yourself. STRATA has its own production data center, but the cost of replicating that to a secondary site would have been both cost and personnel prohibitive. "Duplicating our production data center in terms of purchasing hardware and then having to configure and set it up would have cost us a tremendous amount financially and in terms of time. We don't have the personnel to do that, let alone keep up with the maintenance and upgrades—especially when it's hundreds of miles away. That would have been much too costly and difficult to deploy," comments Dehler.

"It was a good way to try out disaster recovery because we didn't have to make an outlay for equipment. iland has let us gradually get to where we are today."

"The tests have consistently achieved a near-zero RTO and it gives us peace of mind to know it's there should a real disaster occur."

iland's team played a vital supporting role in the deployment of STRATA's disaster recovery solution. It was important to STRATA to work with support staff that were both responsive to requirements during the process and would bring significant knowledge and expertise to the deployment. "This deployment generated a number of requests on our end. After it was originally scoped out, little things popped up and we needed things added here and there. After the initial deployment, iland worked with us to reconfigure a few things in order for the DR solution to work with the new network we have. We ended up needing to get the network expanded to accommodate a large amount of servers. iland's support team was there to help us out all the way. I always get a good response from iland and good follow up."

into the future

As STRATA continues to grow, it will easily be able to scale its disaster recovery plan to continuously protect data and systems. Dehler comments, "We started off in a very modest way, but as cloud technology and services advanced, we've been able to expand our disaster recovery plan and safeguard more of our systems and applications. iland protects the services and data that are mission-critical to our business."

Dehler is happy knowing that iland is continuously focused on bringing the best disaster recovery solution to customers. "I feel that iland is on the leading edge as far as the services that they offer," he remarks. "iland's team is forward thinking and spends time learning about and developing technology that really makes a lot of this much easier than it was three, four or five years ago."

STRATA expects to expand disaster recovery to protect servers that support its hosted software for clients. The company believes these clients will expect that level of service in the future.

"We started off in a very modest way but as cloud technology and services advanced, we've been able to expand our disaster recovery plan and safeguard more of our systems and applications. iland protects the services and data that are mission-critical to our business."

about iland

With data centers in the U.S. and U.K., iland delivers proven enterprise cloud solutions that help companies do business faster, smarter and more flexibly. Unlike any other provider, iland's technology and consultative approach mean anyone—regardless of expertise, location or business objective—can experience the benefits of a hassle-free cloud.

From scaling production workloads, to supporting testing and development, to disaster recovery, iland's secure cloud and decades of experience translate into unmatched service. Underscoring the strength of its platform, the company has been recognized as VMware's Service Provider Partner of the Year, Global and Americas.

iland partners with the following to tailor comprehensive disaster recovery solutions for customers: Zerto, Veeam, VMware SRM, Vision Solutions.

iland, the iland logo, and all other iland product or service names are registered trademarks or trademarks of iland Internet Solutions. All other registered trademarks or trademarks belong to their respective companies.