

MHA Consulting

Tailoring Custom Business Continuity Programs



MICHAEL HERRERA
CEO

Be it a pandemic, a natural or man-made disaster, infrastructure failure, or a cyber-attack, risks posed by unforeseen circumstances have been a longstanding concern for organizations. Today, as organizations pivot to a remote working model due to COVID-19, proactive crisis management has become a top-of-mind priority for business leaders. The pandemic has cast a spotlight on business continuity like never before, highlighting a sense of urgency for enterprises worldwide to withstand disruptions and continue their business.

However, maintaining business continuity is easier said than done in volatile conditions. To bounce back from both short- and long-term eventualities and unexpected challenges, companies must re-evaluate the business continuity plans they have in place. They need robust and effective business continuity and disaster recovery programs to mitigate risks and achieve the resilience to get through adverse events and continue their business without any interruptions. This is where experts like MHA Consulting can make a difference. MHA Consulting—a proven leader in business continuity planning, disaster recovery planning, IT best practices, and crisis management—empowers

enterprises with custom business continuity plans and ensures proactive crisis-management.

In an interview with the editorial team of CIO Applications, Michael Herrera, the CEO of MHA Consulting, discusses at length how his company's business continuity consulting and management services help organizations mitigate business risks and increase resiliency.

Could you provide a brief overview of MHA Consulting?

Since I founded MHA Consulting in 1999, we have dramatically grown to become an almost-24-hour-a-day consulting firm catering to companies throughout the U.S. and globally. There are a number of qualities that separate us from other organizations. Our process and methodology are consistent and aligned with industry standards as well as the culture and needs of our customers. Our team brings decades of experience to deliver the best possible solutions to clients. While our intermediate-level consultants have, on average, 15 years of industry experience, our senior-level staff hold around 20 years of extensive corporate and consulting experience gained by working with a highly diverse set of clients across the globe.

Moreover, our sister company, BCMMETRICSTM, provides us with all the business continuity tools needed in a software-as-a-service environment. We utilize these tools in our engagements to quickly and accurately complete a current state assessment and business impact analysis, as well as develop continuity plans and store them all in a secure repository. Overall, we are comprehensive not just from a consulting standpoint but from a supporting systems perspective as well.

What are the major pain points companies face today in terms of business continuity, and how does your company solve them?

Be it a small, medium, or large company, the COVID-19 crisis has exposed the serious need for business continuity

on an enterprise scale. With unprecedented challenges spurred by the pandemic, companies are faced with not just a single disruption but multiple disruptions simultaneously. In today's business environment, clients are not only encountering the day-to-day pandemic-related issues but also dealing with technology disruptions, cyber incidents, and natural disasters like wildfires and hurricanes. As such, the cataclysmic events that occurred over the last 12 months have clearly highlighted the significance and need for effective business continuity plans. Companies have realized that they must have a "working, living business continuity program" at their disposal to be prepared for any emergency or disruption.

We are driven by our mission to help companies navigate unforeseen challenges and recover and continue their business quickly with no interruption. The experience we've gained by working with clients across a wide array of industry verticals, diverse cultures, and various business needs has equipped us with a competitive advantage and an outstanding framework to meet our clients' unique needs.

What is the approach you follow while catering to your clients?

Every client has a unique culture and specific needs, and the skills needed to execute a project differ correspondingly. I am keen on resource allocation and in-depth identification of our team's skills and capabilities. I ensure that the staff delegated for a particular project have all the skills that fit the needs of the client. At MHA, we are committed to delivering a premium service to each client through the right consultants based on their personality and experience. With this tailored approach, we provide our clients with a standardized process and methodology

We are driven by the mission to help companies navigate unforeseen challenges and recover and continue their business quickly with no interruption

aligned with industry standards and best practices.

We ensure that we deliver the proper orientation and education to our clients and their senior management on what business continuity is and why it is integral to minimizing risks and disruptions. We also follow a consistent approach to managing the client engagement to ensure that we meet deadlines, offer senior management support, and deliver results with our process and methodology in conjunction with carrying out continuous risk status management. Throughout any engagement, MHA provides its clients with a clear picture of the issues they are facing and their potential impact on the overall timeline. Once the engagement comes to an end, we provide our clients with a comprehensive "closeout"—a report consisting of all the details of the engagement from start to finish. Ultimately, we provide our customers with a cost-effective, efficient, and, most importantly, executable solution.

In 2020, we engaged with a large healthcare network with over 35,000 employees and different lines of business—from hospitals to clinics to shared services to a medical school. We were contracted by the healthcare system to complete a business impact analysis (BIA) and implement business continuity plans at a large scale. Due to the size and complexity of their

organization, they were dwelling on a number of questions— "How big should this project be?" "Who should we identify as critical initially?" "Who should we complete the business impact analysis for?" "Who should we write business continuity plans for?" Fortunately, our experience in the healthcare realm is outstanding, as we've worked with numerous healthcare networks in the past. With our unique capabilities and extensive experience, we were able to focus our efforts on a smaller number of BIAs instead of performing a few hundred BIAs. This enabled us to not only identify and concentrate on the most critical areas of their network but also provide additional hours to create more mission-critical continuity plans to support continued operations. More importantly, we educated the senior-level management and transferred our knowledge on business continuity to them, which enabled them to become better consumers and achieve a substantial return on investment.

What does the future hold for your company?

We will continue to expand our diverse client base across industry verticals, both domestically and internationally. Business continuity is here to stay in this connected world, and the need for effective business continuity programs will only increase. What I'm excited about is, over time, business continuity is going to morph into resilience, which companies can design and build into their business so that they face zero disruption. Our focus will be to build business resiliency into the fabric of our clients' companies in every aspect of their business. Resilient companies will be proactive; by recognizing the significance of resiliency and helping companies build this capability, we enable businesses to continue seamlessly without disruptions to their critical operations. **CA**