



Kirk Drake, CEO

- Ongoing Operations LLC
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- Hagerstown, MD
- www.ongoingoperations.com
- Founded: 2005

Ongoing Operations leverages backup and recovery technology to keep banking institutions open even through crises.

ZENITH INFOTECH PARTNER HELPS CREDIT UNIONS MAINTAIN BUSINESS OPERATIONS

What happens if your business operates out of a government building and the site goes into lockdown? You either send everybody home or set up a business continuity plan allowing you to continue operating even at times when only essential government personnel is allowed in the building.

This is the situation that seven credit unions in the Washington D.C. metro area were facing after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The government would go into code red, buildings would be locked down, and credit union employees were locked out.

What to do? If you're Kirk Drake, CTO at one of the credit unions, you start talking to your peers in the other credit unions about creating an entity that handles business continuity planning — and all the associated data storage, backup and recovery — to allow their organizations to operate uninterrupted through security crises. "The need to continue to provide member service despite severe security restrictions inspired us to create a suite of better business continuity solutions," says Drake.

In 2005, after a few years of planning

and seeking seed money, the entity Drake had envisioned, Ongoing Operations LLC, went into business. "By the end of 2006, we had about 20 credit union clients," recalls Drake. A few months later, Drake, who had been splitting his time between his credit union and Ongoing Operations, became CEO of the new entity.

Today Ongoing Operations' client list is approaching 400, as its reach and reputation continue to grow. About half of the clients rely on technology from one of Ongoing Operations' main vendor partners, Zenith Infotech, to ensure their data is properly stored, protected, and available for recovery whenever necessary.

A Different Kind Of Provider

Ongoing Operations, which now employs 30 full-time workers, is an IT services provider with singular characteristics. The company is a Credit Union Service Organization (CUSO), which means its services are specifically tailored to credit unions, even though its client roster has grown to also include community banks, leasing companies, and other businesses.

Ongoing Operations runs three data centers — in Hagerstown, MD, Phoenix, AZ, and Longmont, CO. The

locations in Hagerstown and Longmont also serve as "hot sites," with cubicles set up for credit unions' staff in the event of a disruption at their regular locations. From a technology standpoint, Ongoing Operations' mission is to provide uninterrupted access to credit union members through touch points such as ATMs, email, and phones.

With that in mind, Ongoing Operations has built a roster of services over the years that include business impact analysis, business continuity planning, crisis management, and hosted exchange. At the center of its offerings is the network-attached storage, backup, and disaster recovery technology licensed from Zenith Infotech.

Ongoing Operations sells the technology to its clients under The Replicator brand. The Replicator uses virtualization and automation to act both as a failover server for Windows servers and as a backup and recovery solution. Automated backups take place every 15 minutes, and the failover server can kick into gear within a few minutes of a physical server failure.

Ongoing Operations partnered with Zenith Infotech in 2008 after reviewing storage, backup and recovery technology from about 30 vendors. At the time, says Drake, Zenith Infotech was



the only company to offer a turnkey solution combining virtualization, data vaulting, and LAN transport. Competing products, he says, required more integration and deployment work, which was a drawback for a young company with a small staff and tight budget.

"What really makes the solution unique is its ability to handle both business continuity and daily backups through local and offsite recovery points," says Drake. "Its ability to offer device-to-device replication also has been a big plus for us. We have fewer concerns about the growth of our data now that we can take advantage of this type of replication scheme."

The Proof Is In The Restore

The Zenith Infotech technology has proven its value again and again. Specifically, when a \$500 million credit union in Alabama suffered a server failure, The Replicator jumped into action to perform a data restore. "They were quite pleased with the performance," Drake says.

With these types of results, it's no wonder that Ongoing Operations continues to bank on The Replicator to recruit more clients and help support the growth of existing ones. Credit unions and community banks, after all, have

gotten a boost since the 2008 collapse of large multinational banking institutions that sent the global economy into a downward spiral, as some consumers turned their backs on the big banks.

"Consumers in the past few years have focused more on saving, and they are looking to community financial institutions instead of big banks," says Drake.

As a result, many credit unions are experiencing healthy growth, and in

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some cases, doing mergers and acquisitions. The need for business continuity, as Drake sees it, is sure to continue for years to come. "There is a lot of opportunity in the credit union industry as requirements for business continuity are extensive and remain an area of focus for regulators," he says.

And as credit unions look to increase efficiency, Drake adds, there is an opportunity to market cloud-based solu-

tions to them. "Efficiency has been a big area of focus in the industry," he says. "We see it as positive for us and have seen demand for traditional backup and disaster recovery solutions continue along with a lot of interest in cloud."

With that in mind, Ongoing Operations has been evaluating Zenith Infotech's cloud-based business continuity solution, SmartStyle MirrorCloud. "We are becoming familiar with it, and are actually working with the MirrorCloud solution internally with the intention of focusing sales efforts around it later in 2011," Drake says.

A Chance To Grow Together

As its clients have grown, Ongoing Operations also expects a boost in business as it continues to meet its business continuity requirements. The company had sales revenue of \$9 million in 2010, a 50% increase from the previous year, and is shooting for a boost of 25% in 2011 to \$12.5 million.

Drake says Ongoing Operations' partnership with Zenith Infotech has been a major contributor to the company's growth. He attributes 30% of Ongoing Operations' growth since 2008 to the vendor. Looking ahead, as the focus on the cloud increases, Drake expects Zenith Infotech to remain an important part of the company's growth strategy.

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MSPtv Special Event with Bernard Golden Storage: Where are my Disks?

Wednesday, May 11, 2011 - 12:30 pm ET

"Cloud guru" and author of *Virtualization for Dummies* — Bernard Golden returns to MSPtv Studios for a live discussion on the topic of - Storage: Where are my Disks?

Storage used to be simple: Direct Attached Storage Devices that held structured data (i.e., databases) and files. Today the amount of storage the average company maintains is skyrocketing and posing challenges to the traditional methods of managing storage. This presentation will discuss what's happening with storage, the trends that are driving the data explosion, and the more complex future of storage, with object and NoSQL storage modes becoming more common.

Specific topics addressed include: What's driving storage today, why new storage modes are becoming more prevalent, what companies are doing to manage the data explosion, and the future directions of storage.

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