



## Status quo is not always the way to go

Sometimes it's easy... but then there are those other times we are thrown into a pandemic with little-to-no warning.

We tend to get into a nice little pattern with our jobs. We find what works well for our customers and we continue to do 'that' over and over to maintain a high level of customer satisfaction. Your daily routine almost becomes second nature and you might even call it 'easy'. But what's next? What happens when your industry, your customers, or your life for that matter, throws you a curve ball?

Good companies stand firm, maintain and hold their ground, and wait out the crisis.

*GREAT companies, however, react, pivot, adjust,  
and improvise to go way above and beyond!*

This is when looking out for your customers shows the most. And it feels good doing it, too.

To directly relate this to our industry (Information Technology), we only have to turn to your typical supply and demand issues. As the coronavirus spreads across the world, manufacturing plants, assembly plants, and distribution centers are shutting down. Our supply chain is drying up. Product is becoming more and more difficult to source and this supply chain will suffer long-term effects from the coronavirus. While I see our economy bouncing back stronger than ever from this crisis, it might take 4-6 months to recover from any shortages that occur.

CDS tends to be a very proactive organization.

*Staying on top of security for systems and networks is  
paramount when protecting an organization from threats.*

Although, sometimes it is just as important to prepare for the 'what if' plans (as I call them) as your normal everyday business problems. Some of those might be: What if my computer dies? What if I accidentally delete or lose a file? What if my systems or network become compromised?

In our existing situation, however, we are involved in a multi-level domino of 'what if' games. What if... I have critical work to be done, I can't get to the office, or my computer dies and I can't get a replacement for weeks or months? One problem can quickly exacerbate others causing lost time, customers, and income.

## Going that extra mile

At CDS, we have already switched to 'maintenance mode' a couple weeks ago. We could have sat back and weathered the storm, but we instead chose to take additional action. It's now that our customers need us the most.

1. We have notified our customers that there may be a future supply chain problem allowing them to make choices quickly.
2. We are configuring remote VPN connectivity for our customers that don't already have it.
3. At no cost to our customers, we have analyzed all of our customers' existing equipment so we can devise a solid plan for their business to make it through the crisis.

## Secure Remote Connectivity

Remote connectivity is important, and as a standard, we always implement VPN capable routers/firewalls when designing a customer's network. Although not required, it enables remote or work-from-home capabilities, so our customer-base is ready to implement secure VPN access allowing them to safely work from home during bad weather or other dangerous events. We can typically configure it and turn it on with very little notice as the need arises.

Remote access isn't entirely for getting through a crisis. It's also about convenience, flexibility, and efficiency. If you've ever needed that one file or piece information from your office computer, but you are already home, then this is the solution. If you've ever been stuck at home during a snowstorm, but still had critical work to do, then this is the solution. Log in securely from anywhere and continue delivering services to your customers.

## Maintaining equipment for the long haul

We have been playing triage over the past few weeks. We are recommending the replacement of systems on the verge of dying while equipment is still available to purchase. Meanwhile, we are spending extra time on making the most of the systems that our customers already own that could use a little TLC. Through minor system upgrades, like memory or solid-state drive (SSD) changes, we are preparing them for a minimum of 6-9 months of additional life to make sure they last through any supply chain problems that may linger. We are also helping protect their budget from unnecessary emergency purchases while prices for equipment soar during this volatile time in the market.

The GREAT news is that our customers' equipment is mostly isolated from any disruption or impact that the coronavirus threat will have to most other businesses. We have very few systems that need to be replaced or upgraded. In addition, the majority of our customer-base has at least a system or two sitting on the sidelines as a backup in the case of an emergency.

Why or how are they so well positioned you ask? No, they aren't all new systems. They are a wide mixture of varying specifications and ages. And, while the recommended age for a system being in production is only 3 years, some of the systems we have in place for our customers are 5-7 years old!

Here's our secret: ***The Revolving Replacement*** program. It's a program we developed over 15 years ago to help keep our customers' equipment viable for business use as long as possible. It also provides the customer with a fixed annual budget AND spare equipment to fall back on in the event of an emergency.

No, it's not a payment plan, it's not a lease system, it's not expensive, and you own the equipment. In most cases, it ends being cheaper than only buying systems as your systems fail.

And if that isn't enough to help protect our customers, we also have some new systems that we keep on the shelf for emergencies AND spare used systems we loan out during severe circumstances. Being prepared is what we do and NOW is the time to start preparing for the next big crisis.

*Be ready, prepare for the worst, and always be connected.*

Call CDS if you want to discuss our Revolving Replacement program or if you need help with general IT guidance. NOW is the time to ask yourself what you can do to go above and beyond with your business to differentiate you from your competitors!

I wish you, your family, and your coworkers well during this crisis.