



IBM: Slice and Dice the Box

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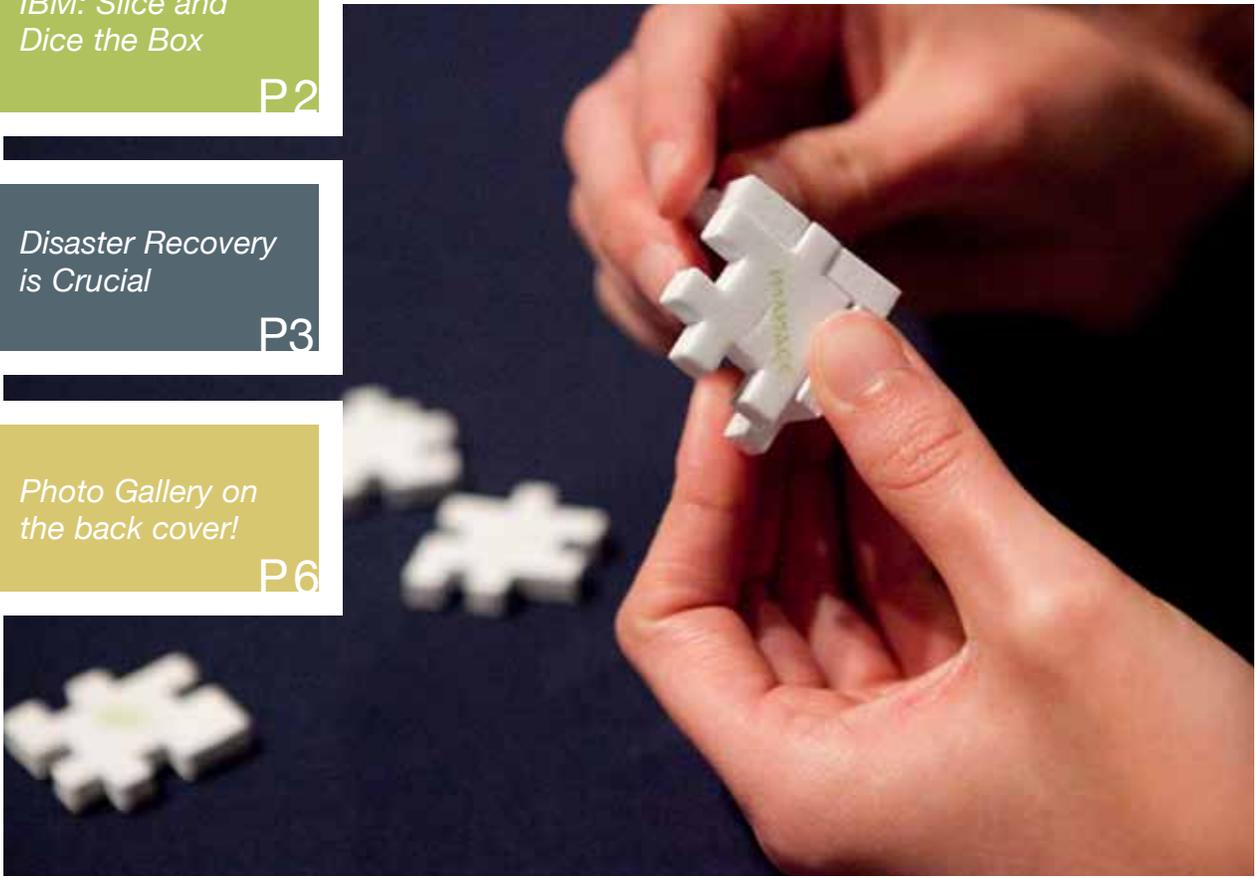
Disaster Recovery is Crucial

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Photo Gallery on the back cover!

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TUG 2010 U2U

Interface

Build 'Cubes of Competitive Advantage': Epner

A process of accurately diagnosing problems, focusing on priority issues, finding creative solutions, and managing ideas to success is the key to building businesses that stand up in good times and bad, Steve Epner, CSP, founder of the BSW Consulting Group, told the Thursday morning general session.

Epner distributed copies of a flat, six-piece jigsaw puzzle to illustrate the way most organizations approach change. Most participants tried to recreate their

puzzles in their original form, but Epner said the truly innovative solution was to build the foam puzzle pieces into a cube. That meant the first step was to discard the frame that originally held the pieces together.

"You can spend your time putting together coasters like the rest of the world, or you can create cubes of competitive advantage," he said. "The question is, what are you working on?"

Diagnosing problems is a critical step "because we mostly

work on symptoms of problems instead of the problems themselves," he said. Repeatedly asking "why" is one of the best ways to move beyond surface issues and understand real solutions.

Focus matters, because most organizations "only have enough change energy to work on one or two special projects at a time." The alternative is to take on one priority project and bring it to completion.

IBM Power Systems: More Ways to ‘Slice and Dice the Box’

By merging its product families over the last several years, IBM has moved toward an integrated offering that allows customers to choose the best mix of hardware, operating systems, and software to meet their needs, according to Dan Sundt, Technical Sales Specialist with IBM Power Systems in Rochester, MN. The strategy behind the company’s Smarter Planet branding initiative is to help customers work more effectively with their hardware, Sundt told a Wednesday afternoon breakout session.

When IBM introduced a common hardware platform in 2004, the various systems still had separate branding, marketing, and people. But in 2008, “we unified them totally” and rebranded the combined package as IBM Power Systems. That single hardware platform now accommodates AIX, IBM i, and Linux operating systems, and users can also “slice and dice the box” by creating different partitions for different operating systems. Unification means common pricing, adapters, warranties, pricing, and packaging across all operating systems. The company has also introduced integrated brands for different system software families—all disk clustering solutions as PowerHA, virtualization technology as PowerVM. In 2008, IBM Systems Director was introduced as a no-charge offering, to help customers manage multiple systems and platforms.

At the moment, IBM is in transition from the POWER6+ processor chipset to POWER7, and a roadmap is in place for POWER8. Sundt said the POWER7 chip was the beginning of true multi-core systems, with four, six, or eight processors per physical socket, up to four threads per core, and drastically higher throughput. A mid-range system, the Power 750 Express, can accommodate up to 32 processors and 128 threads, and “it’s amazing how much horsepower you can get from it.”

The result is a new generation of hardware and software products that promises faster time to value, better price performance, and lower total cost of ownership. All IBM system software families are organized into three editions—Express, Standard, and Enterprise—so that each purchase strikes the best balance between cost and functionality.

“It’s not just a hardware product anymore,” Sundt said.



Lost and found items are at the registration desk in Broadmoor Hall. If you find a lost item, please bring it to the desk.



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Build “Cubes of Competitive Advantage”: Epner

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Epner suggested six strategies for success to guide distribution companies in good times and bad:

- Figure out what business you’re in that is different from everybody else’s
- If it doesn’t add value for the customer, don’t do it
- Improve profits by rationalizing inventory to meet the needs of A and B customers

- Eliminate deliveries as an expense line, either by outsourcing transport or training salespeople not to give away a value-added service free
- Recognize that the Internet is about communicating, not selling
- Allow customers to help manage the relationship online.



Disaster Recovery Investment is Crucial: Tridex

When the cost of catastrophic data loss can run as high as \$2,000 per minute, a preventive approach to business continuity and disaster recovery (BC/DR) is one of the most profoundly important investments a company can make.

On Thursday afternoon, Kris Robertson and Mary Bennett of Tridex Systems Ltd. led a session on the planning process required and the technologies available to ensure that all critical systems, from databases to email, can be recovered within hours or minutes if critical infrastructure is damaged, destroyed, or taken out of service.

Although natural disasters receive the most media attention, Robertson explained that hardware malfunction and human error account for 70% of data interruptions and loss. Bennett noted that human error can be as simple as a replacement staff member accidentally deleting a root drive in a company that neglected to verify that its tape backups had actually captured all their data. At least one participant admitted that it had been some time since his company had checked its backups.

Robertson noted that the consequences of data loss are huge: a \$25 million company with 25% gross margin and 3% profit would stand to lose \$25,000 in margin and \$3,000 in profit per day of down time. Of the small businesses that suffer data loss without a BC/DR plan, he said 40% never reopen, 50% are out of business within two years, and 93% fail within five years.

He presented a five-part planning process that begins with risk assessment and continues through business impact analysis, program design, implementation, and testing, before looping back to another round of risk assessment. Typically, the first two steps are the business continuity activities undertaken by executives, while the last three are disaster recovery tasks assigned to IT departments. Bennett said companies should conduct routine reviews every quarter, to ensure that new assets are fully covered.





The 'Other' ROI

By Suzanne Minard
Communications Coordinator, The User Group

One of the great things about volunteering for a TUG Special Interest Group (SIG) is that you get so much back for the time you put in.

If you're like most conference participants, your interest in TUG has just hit its annual high. We've spent three intense days together, learning how Infor software and our TUG connections can help make our organizations better, smarter, and more profitable. But after you get home, the buzz of this week's conference will quickly become a distant memory.

You don't have to let that happen.

For SIG leaders, today's closing session won't be the end. It'll be the beginning of a year-long journey in which we keep on participating, and that participation keeps on giving back, to us and to our companies.

Think of it as the "other" ROI.

My volunteer time as a SIG leader gives me direct access to the people at Infor who decide what will be added to the business system my company uses. Last year, I was one of four participants in a conference call with the architect for FACTS, the software platform my company uses for special pricing. We spent two hours recommending enhancements to make the product even better. And then, they built it.

My SIG role has also expanded my network of colleagues who handle distribution issues in other industries. This reference group opens doors to new ideas and solutions that help me deliver greater value to my company.

The SIG network has room for anyone who wants to get involved. It doesn't have to be a full-year commitment—if there are certain months when your calendar is full, you can volunteer at some other time of year.

But you should do something. As soon as you take that step, your SIG becomes stronger, and you can be sure that you'll get back so much more than you give.

For SIG contact information, stop by the information kiosk or email gbrown@theusergroup.org.

Last Chance to Enter for iPad or Kindle!

Today's drawing is at lunch! Keep finding those great ideas and filling out the TUG cards for your chance to win. But take note: we DO read your cards, and only those completely filled out with valid ideas will be eligible for the drawing.



Helen Bailey
Infor Global Solutions

"I can say that the users have been more engaged in the individual SIGs this year. There seems to be a new energy in our user community after the announcement of distribution going to a separate business unit. I think they're very much looking forward to the things we'll be able to do as a result."



Aric Vandevord
Mascott Equipment Co.

"I learned about some upgrades for a product we've purchased but haven't yet installed. The work the TUG volunteers did in conjunction with the authors was just amazing. By having the volunteer organization step up to the plate, they've come up with a huge improvement that will make a big difference for us."

Pat Christensen
Quality Bicycle Products



"Our mission is to help people get healthier and out of their cars by using their bicycles. One of the reasons we could change the way the bicycle industry sells parts was that we had a software package that allowed us to see our numbers, and a great accounting staff to interpret and evaluate them. That's why we have four people here."



Thursday Photo Gallery

Session Explores MyDay 1.2

Participants received a sneak peak at the promise and potential pitfalls of Infor Global Solutions' MyDay 1.2 in a Thursday afternoon session by Randy Morris, Business Technology Manager at Doe and Ingalls of North Carolina.

MyDay provides a nearly instantaneous view of data from Doe and Ingalls' AS400 server, Morris said. Two years of transaction data took only about four hours to transfer to MyDay's data warehouse.

Version 1.2 will also give administrators broad configuration power, which translates into a high degree of flexibility and customization.

But Morris said some users in his organization have been slow to migrate to MyDay. Not only can they easily access their data other ways, but they would either have to get used to viewing the data the way MyDay presents it, or configure MyDay to show it the way they want it.

At present, all Doe and Ingalls' users can see all their data, a situation that prompted Morris to immediately implement a new security policy.

Morris will go into detail on MyDay 1.2 in an upcoming webinar. Information: Carla Pickard, carla.pickard@paperlinx.ca.



Stay tuned to the TUG website for a comprehensive gallery of this year's conference photos!



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