



An Appia Case Study

MNJ Technologies Direct is a leading provider of hardware and software for business and government. MNJ's electronic systems enable its customers easily to evaluate and purchase a wide variety of technology products.

Business Challenge

Early one morning in August, 2006, an electrical storm wreaked havoc throughout the Chicago area. One local meteorologist reported over 20,000 lightning strikes in one three-hour period alone.

During the storm, MNJ's headquarters suffered two direct lightning strikes that destroyed virtually all of its network hardware, phones, and workstations. The first strike destroyed the controls for the sprinkler system and building security system. The second hit an antenna on top of the building, traveled through the electrical system, blew up a hard drive tray, melted the firewall, and destroyed 13 phones. The pulse from the strike then traveled through the network and destroyed one of MNJ's two Cisco CallManager units, various LAN switches, 12 desktop computers, and several servers.

The second strike rendered MNJ's network infrastructure and phone system virtually useless. "People say that lightning doesn't strike the same place twice," said Adam Farb, MNJ's Director of IT. "I have proof that it does."

The Appia Solution

After the weather had passed and the damage had been assessed, Farb and his staff were immediately concerned with how to get their voice and data network up and running so that the company could resume business. While researching vendors, Farb was referred to Appia Communications. Though Appia's engineering staff had no prior knowledge of MNJ's network or hardware configuration, Appia agreed to accept the time-critical challenge of restoring service.

Appia engineers began work immediately to reconfigure server stacks, reroute damaged phones, and restore data settings to previous levels. Within seven hours of the strike, MNJ's voice and data systems were back up and running with enough capacity to perform daily operations.



“Appia jumped right in that day and came to the rescue to restore our backup configurations for our Cisco VoIP and switch hardware,” said Farb.

MNJ ordered new servers and had them shipped overnight directly to Appia. Upon receiving them, Appia engineers configured them so they could be deployed as quickly as possible upon installation at MNJ. The engineers then drove to MNJ’s headquarters to deploy the CallManagers and Unity servers. The system was up and running within 24 hours of the first conversation between MNJ and Appia.

The Results

Soon after MNJ’s voice and data networks were restored, Appia worked with MNJ to create a comprehensive disaster recovery plan. MNJ’s Call Manager system is now being professionally managed by Appia. The company’s CallManager and Unity servers are backed up to an Appia POP each week and operating systems and applications are updated as needed. The service will allow for a complete restoration of the Call Manager environment should another disaster strike.

“Appia Communications has been instrumental in creating an effective disaster recovery plan. Their execution and timeliness in assisting our IT staff in upgrading and maintaining our hardware for VoIP at MNJ have been flawless since the strike.”