The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

Final Copy of Case Study

Status:
Laureate

Year:
2013

Organization Name:
Credit Suisse – Information Technology

Organization URL:
www.credit-suisse.com

Project Name:
Hurricane Sandy Recovery – Habitat for Humanity Setup

Please select the category in which you are submitting your entry:
Philanthropy

Please provide an overview of the nominated project. Describe the problem it was intended to solve, the technology or approach used, how it was innovative and any technical or other challenges that had to be overcome for successful implementation and adoption. (In 300 words or less.)

Hurricane Sandy caused major destruction to the Northeast U.S. in late October 2012. As individuals worked to recover their personal lives and deal with property damage, loss of power, gas shortages, and ensuring the safety of loved ones, Credit Suisse IT employees managed to come together. Habitat for Humanity, a long-time partner of the Bank, was displaced from their lower Manhattan office. The organization that helps build homes for the less fortunate was without an office to manage operations in the midst of a natural disaster, when people in the area were now without homes. In the spirit of partnership and goodwill, Credit Suisse provided space and technology support for Habitat. The organization was up and running overnight in the Park Avenue Building, which was quite the feat

considering Credit Suisse had only recently come off using generator power themselves and had countless employees out of the office due to the storm. Staff volunteered their time (much of it after hours) to: Set up fully functional workstations; deploy new phones, phone numbers, voicemail, and IP network connections, including call-forwarding; provide fax and printers capabilities; provide assistance with wired/wireless solutions; leverage 4G WiFi hotspots to address specific connectivity needs; ensure VPN software was installed on all laptops; provide support for a sight-challenged user, including the provisioning of Thunder and installation support of JAWS (screen reader software); establish a support hotline and Level 2 Support for the duration of their stay; provide staff to walk up 27 flights of stairs in Habitat's office to retrieve vital records and equipment. IT also partnered with other departments to provide office supplies, vending machines, building access ID cards, and office space cleaning. Habitat's assistance to families impacted by Sandy is immeasurable. We are proud to have contributed to this critical effort.

When was this project implemented or last updated? (Please specify month and year.) Has it incorporated new technologies and/or other innovations since its initial deployment? (In 300 words or less.)

The project started October 29, 2012, when Hurricane Sandy made landfall in New York. Habitat for Humanity is currently still occupying office space at Credit Suisse.

Is implementation of the project complete? If no, please describe the project's phases and which phase the project is now in. (In 300 words or less.)

This project is ongoing. Habitat for Humanity is still occupying the space and we continue to offer IT support for their operations.

Please provide at least one example of how the technology project has benefited a specific individual or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work. (In 300 words or less.)

Hurricane Sandy left many people in the New York tri-state area with severely damaged homes and some were even left homeless. Habitat for Humanity, an organization known for providing homeownership assistance, was needed by the surrounding environment more than ever. However, they too were impacted by the storm, losing their downtown Manhattan office. Rachel Hyman, Acting Executive Director at Habitat for Humanity, New York City, stated, "Credit Suisse has helped us remain effective. Their aid in securing our office space, Internet and phones has allowed us to continue our fundraising efforts at a crucial time,

permitting us to immediately begin assisting Sandy-affected families in NYC, while raising money for long-term rebuilding. During this time we have also helped low-income families achieve homeownership." Credit Suisse enabled Habitat for Humanity to continue operations from a temporary location on the Credit Suisse New York campus. As a result, Habitat for Humanity was able to engage and support the public almost immediately after the storm. Appendix 1 illustrates a Toy Drive that Habitat for Humanity was able to run while in the Credit Suisse building. Being able to continue with their yearly plans and respond to the damage left by Hurricane Sandy was critical for the organization.

Would this project be considered an innovation, a best practice or other notable advancement that could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations and uses? If yes, please describe that here. (In 300 words or less.)

Regarding best practices, there are always opportunities to improve. However, Credit Suisse IT, in partnership with Business Continuity Management, provided a stellar response to the event through diligent preparation and dedicated staff. Yes, there were many lessons to be learned from the response to Hurricane Sandy, but a great deal of activities was done right. So much so that when the markets re-opened on October 31st (after two days of being closed), Credit Suisse captured an unprecedented market share in Equities Trading. The high levels of stability enabled Credit Suisse to offer office space and Internet connectivity to its business partners and clients. Habitat for Humanity benefited greatly from this situation.