There is never a bad time to review your business power strategy. The result will either validate the choices you've made to protect your critical assets and processes or uncover steps you need to take to further safeguard business continuity.

We're going to look at the factors that will help you analyse your current power situations and easily identify where changes can be made to deliver assurance and confidence in your ability to keep operating and protect your assets.

Strong Foundations

If you have uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) that are sufficient to support your power load, the lion's share of the work is already done. You have an excellent foundation to ensure protection against power outages or disruptions.

The next step is to make certain that your UPS system will operate when needed – this is an ongoing process involving regular health checks and planned preventative maintenance (PPM).

Extending the lifetime of your UPS system is one of the best investments you can make as it removes risk and uncertainty from your businesses ability to continue operating.

Visibility is valuable. The more trustworthy and up-to-date data you have, the better equipped you'll be to make confident decisions easily.

Monitoring

When you don't monitor your UPS and supporting infrastructure, it's like driving in the rain without windscreen wipers - you may be protected from the downpour, but your visibility is severely hindered.

Safeguarding your IT equipment and data from power incidents is easily done by deploying power monitoring software to oversee any equipment protected by your UPS system.

There are several options available to you, from basic network cards to multiple software platforms offering comprehensive monitoring and trending. Ultimately, obtaining the right data to make informed decisions is critical.

The best way to ensure you have a fit-for-purpose monitoring solution is to seek advice from UPS experts. Not only will you have recommendations that are tailored to your unique requirements now, but you'll also be able to discuss operational scalability and incorporate power protection as your infrastructure grows.

There are several power monitoring options that will notify you when action must be taken, from DIY monitoring products through to the centrally managed and 24/7 support escalation services. The key is to enlist help in identifying what approach will work best for you.

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Environment

So, you have the right sized UPS system and you can see what its doing. The next step is to look at where you keep them and whether their environment is set up to ensure optimum performance and extended service life.

As with any sensitive electrical or IT equipment, UPSs can be affected by a range of environmental factors over time. Environmental factors can also be measured to alert you if the environment of your UPS changes to become sub optimal for performance and service life.

Temperature can have a tremendous affect on the performance and longevity of your UPS and its batteries. Too-high temperatures can lead to early-life failures as components experience swelling. This is especially important for batteries as, at worst, it can present a fire risk.

UPS equipment and batteries should be kept cool. Between 18°C and 23°C is recommended to ensure optimum performance, maximum operational lifespan and most importantly, guarantee safety.

Humidity and dust (or other airborne debris) can also cause real performance and safety issues for a UPS system. Humid environments cause any dust that may be present in electronic equipment to become conductive or corrosive and effect the way electronics operate in equipment.

Vibration and shocks also present a very real risk to your power protection solution, especially if your UPS is operating in seismically vulnerable locations.

Again, talking to your UPS experts will uncover the options available and provide insight into what will work best for your business. Solutions for managing environmental factors and ensuring optimum long-term performance can range from server room design to specially tailored cabinets that will monitor, manage and maintain environmental factors for you.

Service & Health Checks

As with any asset, you'll want to make sure that it is performance-ready and well maintained throughout its operational lifetime.

UPS systems are no different and require regular planned preventative maintenance (PPM) and servicing. Even the best made components will wear-out over time with capacitors, circuit boards, fans, batteries and power supplies are all consumable parts that you can expect to replace in a UPS.

The mean time between failures (MTBF) for well-maintained UPS systems is over 20 times better than for UPSs that receive no maintenance. This means that arranging a regular PPM schedule can mean years more operational lifetime for power protection assets you've invested in.

The benefit of a proper maintenance program is that replacement can occur as a proactive task rather than a reactive repair.

UPS experts can provide you with all the key aspects of a service plan including regular maintenance, replacement of consumables, onsite repair and parts and emergency 24/7 callout. In many cases there will be a tier of service plan that perfectly suits your business so it's highly worth talking to a UPS expert about your current and future requirements.

NZ Electrical regulations require that works on hard wired single and three phase UPS systems be undertaken by electrically registered people – so knowing that you've partnered with the right company to support your power infrastructure is pivotal to business continuity.

Furthermore, a life-cycle management programme will provide you with the visibility to ensure operational readiness and pro-actively budget for replacement at end of life.

Choose The Right Partner

As with your UPS solution being ready to perform when needed, your UPS partner should also be ready to rapidly support your operation when needed.

When engaging an expert to review your power strategy it is highly likely that they will identify things you may not have thought of or uncover potential risks that remained hidden.

This process can be delivered quickly and easily and there is never a bad time to begin. The only outcome is that you'll have more confidence in your ability to keep operating.

Key Facts

- Approximately two-thirds of business down-time events are preventable
- All UPS systems have consumable components that require occasional replacement
- Batteries require constant monitoring and regular service/replacement

Key Questions

- How critical is your UPS to your business?
- Will the factory warranty deliver the service I require?
- Is your service provider manufacturer-trained and electrically registered?
- How fast do I need my service delivered?
- Do I need certainty of cost provided by a full parts and labour plan?
- Am I willing to pay for any parts that require replacement?

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