

Danske Bank improves resilience efficiency by 300%



1. The need

Danske Bank is a Danish multinational banking and financial services corporation with over 21,000 employees. It is the largest bank in Denmark, with 3.3 million personal and business customers and more than 2,300 corporate and institutional customers in 8 countries.

Danske Bank's IT resilience team wanted a better way to manage its resilience activities. Like every major bank, it was seeing increasing regulatory scrutiny and needed to reduce the risk of incidents that could impact customers. The existing processes for this were effective but inefficient and manually intensive.

The first step on this journey was improving the performance of the bank's Data Center Recovery testing, which was mainly being run using spreadsheets and Confluence. Using these methods they were only able to test and shut down around 130 services, taking 10 hours, which was neither fast nor efficient enough; the testing timelines removed available windows for other technical teams to perform changes or releases. The absence of effective workflow orchestration for the failover testing limited the organization to small, incremental activities due to the available resources and logistics.

2. How Cutover helped

The team orchestrated two large tests in Cutover. For the first, they converted their failover plans into a Cutover runbook containing 3,000 tasks. For the second, they uploaded individual plans for each database service owner. Each owner could check on their team's progress leading up to the event, and on the day they merged all plans into one runbook to manage the whole event in one view.

During the second test, they were able to reduce time and effort, making sure the plan was correct and had been verified by all stakeholders. Using Cutover also enabled them to allocate resources at the right time.

The node map enabled resilience managers to map dependencies for a clear view of the entire process. Each participant could also view the process flow for their tasks.

The team went through a couple of rehearsal runs, identifying any changes that needed to be made to enable a smoother go live.

Dashboards provided real-time updates and made it easy to see which tasks were in progress or ready to be executed. This also allowed the resilience manager to check in and provide support proactively.

An automatically generated audit trail reduced work post-event.

3. The results

Cutover gave the bank more confidence that they could successfully and quickly fail over services between their data centers if the situation arose for real - as well as enabling them to prove this capability to the regulator more easily.

