Rowhouse SYSTEMS

SAMPLE: FICTIONAL COMPANY

STABILIZATION REPORT

Order form stopped after an Office update

for Brightwater Fittings Co.

PREPARED FOR	PREPARED BY	DATE	REQUEST
Tom Reyes, Owner	David Gul, Rowhouse Systems	March 10, 2026	K7Q2M9A4

IN SHORT

On Monday morning the order form in Orders_MASTER_v7.xlsm stopped opening. Over the weekend Office had been reinstalled on the office PCs as the 64-bit version, and the order form relied on a date picker that 64-bit Office does not include. We replaced it with one built into the workbook, made the macros safe for 64-bit Office, and orders were flowing again by 12:40 pm. The workbook scores 8 out of 10 for fragility: it will fail again, and this report shows where and what to do about it.

7:55 am	12:40 pm	$700	8 / 10
Orders stopped	Orders flowing again	Fixed price, diagnosis included	Fragility score

What happened on Monday, March 9

7:55 am	Dana can't open the order form. Excel says it "could not load an object because it is not available on this machine".
8:10 am	Tom sends the request and the workbook through rowhousesystems.com. The acknowledgment arrives with request number K7Q2M9A4.
8:35 am	David replies. Tom pays the $250 diagnosis.
9:50 am	Cause found: the order form's date picker does not exist in 64-bit Office, which the weekend reinstall put on every PC.
10:05 am	Fixed price for the repair sent: $450 more, $700 in all. Tom approves by reply.
12:15 pm	The repaired workbook is delivered, tested on a copy of Monday's orders.
12:40 pm	Dana enters the morning's 23 orders from her sticky notes.

Orders were stopped for 4 hours 45 minutes. Nothing was lost: every order from the morning was on paper and went in the same day.

Why it happened

Office comes in two versions, 32-bit and 64-bit, and new installs of Microsoft 365 now get the 64-bit one. Brightwater's PCs had run the 32-bit version for years. When Office was reinstalled over the weekend, it came back as 64-bit.

The order form used a date picker from an old Microsoft library of controls. That library was never made for 64-bit Office, so the form could not load, and every macro that opens it stopped. Two other macros called Windows directly in a way 64-bit Office refuses. They had not run yet on Monday, but they would have failed next.

What we did

- Replaced the date picker with one built into the workbook, which works on both versions of Office.
- Rewrote the two Windows calls so they work on 64-bit Office.
- Signed the macros, so Office runs them without a security warning.
- Tested the workbook on a copy of Monday's orders before handing it back, and kept Friday's copy in case anything was missed.

How fragile the workbook is

The score counts what makes a failure likely, or makes one expensive when it comes. 1 is sturdy; 10 means the next failure is a matter of time.

8 / 10

Fragile: expect another failure within the year



Sturdy — Fragile

WHAT ADDS TO THE SCORE	WHAT WE FOUND	POINTS
One person at a time	Only one person can have the file open. Everyone else waits or writes orders down to type in later.	2
Parts Microsoft is retiring	Two more forms, stock and customers, use controls from the same old library. They will fail the same way.	2
No history	One copy on the shared drive, overwritten every day. A bad save loses the day's work.	1
Orders typed twice	Each day's orders are copied into the shipping tab by hand.	1
One person understands it	Maria is the only one who knows how the macros work, and there are no notes.	1
Size	38 MB and 41 sheets, with ten years of orders in one sheet. Slow to open and to save.	1

What to watch, most serious first

HIGH

Two more forms will fail the same way

The stock and customer forms use controls from the same retired library. They are fine for now only because nobody has opened them since the reinstall.

HIGH

No backup older than yesterday

If the file is damaged or saved over by mistake, there is nothing to go back to beyond Friday's copy we kept.

MEDIUM

One person at a time

The sticky notes on Monday are what happens every day on a smaller scale.

MEDIUM

Orders typed twice

Every copy into the shipping tab is a chance for a mistake.

LOW

The signing certificate expires in March 2027

When it does, Office will warn about the macros again. Renewing it takes minutes if someone remembers.

Your options

Ordered from smallest to largest. You don't have to do any of them, but we'd do the first one soon.

DO THIS NOW

Fix the rest

Replace the two remaining retired controls and set up a nightly backup that keeps 30 days.

Removes the two High findings: the next failure we can already see, and the missing safety net.

$650 fixed

WORTH CONSIDERING

Strengthen

Move the orders into a proper database behind the workbook.

Several people can work at once and the typing twice ends. The workbook looks the same to everyone.

$4,200 fixed

IF YOU'RE GROWING

Upgrade

A web system for orders, stock and shipping.

If more people will need it, or the warehouse should use a tablet, this is the step that lasts. It starts with a Blueprint.

Blueprint from $1,500

Staying on the workbook? Workbook Care, $150 a month, checks it after Microsoft's updates, renews the signing certificate, and includes one hour of changes a month.

Next step

Reply with "Fix the rest" and we'll send the $650 invoice; the work is done within two business days of payment. Want to talk about Strengthen or Upgrade first? Reply to the same email and you'll have an answer within one business day.

Rowhouse SYSTEMS

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Sample report. Brightwater Fittings Co. and its staff are fictional, and all prices are illustrations.