

## STEP 3: DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY

From the beginning of creating the business continuity plan, aim to embed a business continuity management culture throughout the organisation to ensure that business continuity management becomes an integral part of organisation's strategic day-to-day business as usual operational management. Achieve this by winning over middle management and building awareness that BCM is a company-wide specialisation, not just an IT function.

As a guide each business continuity plan should aim to contain the following:

### **Statement of clear purpose of the plan**

### **The structure of the crisis team(s)**

### **Business recovery**

### **Work area recovery**

### **Technology recovery**

### **Public Relations**

### **Staff focus**

### **A description of the premises**

### **Statement of clear purpose of the plan**

The plan should outline the direction to take in the event of an incident. It should include a clear statement on how risk averse you are and you may want to include a statement on what your definition of a disaster is, for example: "any unwanted significant incident which threatens personnel, buildings, or the operational structure of an organisation which requires special measures to be taken to restore things back to normal", (definition taken from part 2, 'How Resilient is Your Business to Disaster', Home Office publication, 1997).

### **The structure of the crisis team(s)**

It must be clear when emergency plans are to be implemented and who has the authority to implement them. The plan should include all persons responsible for initiating the plan's implementation, both junior and senior.

It must be clear who is responsible for what in the plan's execution and who has the key roles. It must also be clear to whom everyone answers.

The team could be divided as follows: Gold, Silver and Bronze personnel, and might include the likes of a chairperson, security, HR, media relations, transport, and finance and facilities.

If you have nominated a team to create, co-ordinate and deliver the plan, it might be helpful to divide the personnel involved in the plan into three different categories:

Gold - the thinkers responsible for the strategy, such as the CEO.

Silver - the planners and co-ordinators that will deal with the tactical aspects of the plan. These will include a senior management team of experts within your business. They are involved in your BCM approach and specific planning and responsible for co-ordinating and directing the resources of the business to ensure that the plans are being properly implemented. Silver people will link with Gold and keep them updated on the developing situation.

Bronze - the doers who will be responsible for recovering/ restarting crucial business functions. They are responsible for ensuring that their specific business continuity plans are implemented. They take direction from the Silver people and keep them updated.

You may decide that you will need a set of plans for each of the Gold, Silver and Bronze teams, or a set of different plans for different Bronze teams, such as a separate IT department plan, which will, for instance, include more technical jargon and specific data.

In your contingency planning, make sure that all levels of staff involved in business recovery understand the nature of threat and the importance of planning. Allocate a list of suitable locations where your Business Continuity team should meet, if an incident occurs. This should consist of a room on-site, a place in a public building, e.g. a local pub, someone's house or a meeting room at your alternative fall back site.

If an incident occurs, meet with everyone from the Business Continuity team as soon as you can, probably after the first planned emergency procedures have been implemented, and then continue meeting every 24 or 48 hours.

### **Business Recovery**

Develop practices and procedures needed to mitigate risk and reputation if business operations have been affected. It includes the priority tasks that must be addressed if the business has to relocate and needs to communicate with clients and service providers during the period of disruption.

It is essential that such lists are updated regularly, at least quarterly, and preferably monthly, and they must recognise the likely availability of staff 'out of hours' and weekends and during holiday periods.

The members of the 'crisis team' should be supplied with a simple check list of the actions they must take during and after an incident. Using brightly coloured cards or paper is a cheap and way of ensuring that people know they are using the most up-to-date version. The lists should be accessible and available at all times and in several locations, electronically and in hard copy.

<b>Considerations in developing your strategy:</b>	<b>Answer</b>
What are the three most vital things to your business?	
What is the weakest link in your business?	
What are the three worst-case scenarios for your business?	
What effect will they have on your business?	
What preventative measures can you take to minimise the possibility of the worst happening?	
What measures can you take to minimise the effect it will have on your business?	E.g. prepare an off-site location to work from etc.

### **Work area recovery**

This could be the key aspect of your plan. If you intend to work from another site, there are several options to consider:

You might decide some staff can work from home temporarily.

You might have made arrangements with another company to use their facilities.

Choose a 'cold site' agreement, usually provided by a business continuity supplier involves erecting a temporary building. You will usually be able to move in after about 12 days.

Or a 'hot site', also usually provided by a specialist continuity company, makes desks available within about 4 hours. This option is easy to rehearse, but relatively expensive.

#### Technology recovery

Most businesses nowadays have complex IT, telecommunications and utilities' structures in place.

#### **Information Technology:**

It is imperative to keep inventory lists of software and hardware materials, as well as your suppliers so that you can replace them immediately if needed. Customise inventory lists according to your needs. It is worth checking in advance if your insurance covers the replacement of damaged items immediately, or whether you need the insurance company's consent.

#### **Telecommunications:**

You may have the capability to access your telephone system remotely, from another site. Make sure all relevant programming is undertaken as soon as possible. Make a list of all the access numbers and keep them safely with all your important documents on and off-site.

#### **Utilities:**

In case of a utilities failure, make sure you have a list of all of your utilities' providers, their contact details and your account numbers. Make sure you have an 'old style' telephone handset which you can plug directly into a telephone socket. This has its own power source via the line and will not be affected by a power cut.

#### **Public Relations**

The PR process can make or break a company's reputation. PR will influence how existing and potential customers, suppliers and all other stakeholders will react to the incident.

Nominate a company spokesperson, and ensure that all staff know who it is. For resilience, make sure more than one staff member is nominated and that they have some training in media handling.

Make certain the story is the same from all sources: if the emergency services are involved, coordinate your information with them.

#### **Possibly hire a PR consultant**

Consider the production of an emergency newsletter to staff. If it is a seriously disruptive incident and you cannot keep all your staff on site during recovery, it is essential to keep them well informed about progress.

Have a pre-prepared list of facts on the organisation's functions, safety record, etc.

Place advertisements in local or national papers as needed.

#### **Staff Focus**

Consult your staff when drawing up the plan. This will ensure that they feel part of the plan and will therefore be more willing to participate fully when something does happen.

Be sensitive how you communicate your plan: the phrasing 'essential staff' or 'vital departments' suggests that some of your staff aren't as important as others. Obviously, they all are, but some priority needs must be met.

Make sure that you have plans in place to take care of your employees once an incident does occur. Make the following contingencies:

Petty cash for travel home in case of evacuation

## **Counselling**

A description of the premises

This is important for evacuation purposes. Clearly mark where the emergency exits are. Also, include lists of the contents of your premises for insurance purposes.

## **Damage Minimisation**

Remember that there is a common law duty to minimise loss and this requirement is often invoked under a contract of insurance. It therefore follows that expense controls should not be abandoned in the anxiety to make the business operational again.