

## Business Continuity Management Strategy

Every organisation dependent upon technological resources for its survival should have a comprehensive Business Continuity Management (BCM) strategy in place to ensure the sustained viability of the organisation when unforeseen emergencies take place.

A good BCM strategy will mitigate the materialisation of an assessed risk and the effect that such an incident would have on continuing operations, aiding the timely resumption of business as usual. These incidents include natural disasters, such as; flooding,



earthquakes, fire, explosions, etc, and manmade disasters, such as; cyber attacks, civil unrest



and terrorist activity. A successful BCM strategy must consider the

indirect as well as the direct impacts of any disaster scenario.

The following definition is provided by the Business Continuity Institute (BCI): "*Business Continuity Management is a holistic management process that identifies potential impacts that threaten an organisation and provides a framework for building resilience and the capability for an effective response that safeguards the interests of its key stakeholders, reputation, brand and value creating activities.*"

### Why bother?

Have you ever heard the saying "Fail to Plan, Plan to Fail"?

- A company that experiences a computer outage lasting more than 10 days will never fully recover. 50% will be out of business within 5 years.<sup>1</sup>
- 70% of companies that experience a major data loss go out of business within a year.<sup>2</sup>
- 94% of companies suffering from a catastrophic data loss do not survive.<sup>3</sup>

Having a BCM should not be regarded as a costly planning process; instead it should be seen as a process that adds value to the organisation. Having a BCM strategy shows that an organisation has planned to continue to deliver the services required and expected by its customers under adverse circumstance. An organisation's

<sup>1</sup> Jon Toigo

<sup>2</sup> DTI / PWC

<sup>3</sup> University of Texas

sponsors and personnel are also encouraged, knowing that, in the case of the former, the funds they have bestowed on the organisation are safe, and the latter will appreciate that their livelihood are being considered.

## BCM Strategy

There are three levels of BCM strategy for which planning needs to be considered:

- Organisational Strategy – top-level planning to ensure that strategic goals are not compromised;
- Process Level Strategy – providing for a resumption of normal business functions and processes; and,
- Resource Level Strategy – providing for the deployment of necessary resources to maintain functions and processes.

The BCM Strategy identifies effective recovery solutions to enable the business to continue to operate key activities from the time of the business interruption until it is able to recover its full operational ability. To determine the risks that your business faces and which require mitigation, you must conduct a Business Impact Assessment (BIA) from both quantitative and qualitative points of view as a way of determining the organisation's Maximum Tolerable Period of Disruption (MTPD) and therefore decide on Recovery Time Objectives (RTO) for each mission critical component. Critical activities are identified as those that have the greatest impact over the shortest period of time and need to be recovered most rapidly. You must take the appropriate steps in developing a continuity strategy for your organisation and know what to do to withstand future disasters.

## Disaster Recovery

A Disaster Recovery (DR) plan steps in where the BC plan leaves off. If the BC plan fails then you have a disaster on your hands, after all, disasters such as terrorist acts, civil unrest, fires and explosions, and very much anything that is likely to stop, prevent or interrupt your everyday business, will have been considered in the BIA of the BC plan. The DR plan is used to bring chaos to an end and bring about normal operations in quick-time.

## BCM Training

Once these strategies are in place an organisation would need to roll out appropriate training to all personnel to whom the strategy will apply – usually all employees, but which will include; those that are involved with every-day BC/DR processes - personnel conducting backup operations; any security staff required to implement a raised security alert level; key holders required to be first on site in the case of an emergency to ascertain the degree of disruption, etc.

## Compliance / Obligation

An appropriate BCM strategy is compulsory for any Government Department or Agency and will be considered during the accreditation process, but they are also highly necessary for any organisation seeking ISO27001 or BS25999 Certification. Needless to say that it would be negligent of any organisation, public or private sector, which processes business critical information to not have an appropriate BCM Strategy in place from the outset.

## Regency IT Consulting

Regency IT Consulting can provide assistance to both public and private sector organisations to ensure that you have a robust Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Strategy in place to meet compulsory objectives or to provide evidence to your stakeholders that the risks associated with the loss of business services have been considered and a comprehensive, tailored strategy is in place to mitigate them. Working closely with you to understand the business risks associated with your organisation our Consultants can provide advice and tailored documentation regarding the Business Continuity and Disaster Recover Strategy including:

- Business Impact Assessment
- Business Continuity Plans
- Disaster Recovery Plans
- Data Recovery Plans
- Guidelines
- Standards
- Policies
- Training of personnel regarding the strategy

The provision of a robust, tailored Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Strategy will ensure that your organisation's day-to-day business requirements are met without stoppage, irrespective of circumstances or events.

Regency IT Consulting have the expertise and experience to provide all aspects of a tailored Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Strategy within your business environment. Regency's highly experienced Consultants are able to deliver the full spectrum of specialist IA support to businesses within both the public and private sector, throughout the UK and elsewhere.