

# Business Continuity Planning: Developing a Strategy to Minimize Risk and Maintain Operations

By Adam Booher

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# Overview

An integral part of a company's Risk Mitigation strategy is the development and adoption of a thorough Business Continuity Plan (BCP). A detailed BCP will serve as a functional operations guide in times of service disruption or crisis, and can reduce the impact of the disruption's scope and duration on the company. The primary goals of the BCP are to minimize downtime, to facilitate timely restoration of critical services, and to mitigate risks that could impact the company's ability to serve their clients/customers.

# Scope of the Business Continuity Plan

The BCP covers, but is not limited to, four distinct areas:

## Emergency Response Plan



- Goal: Secure safety of employees and company assets.
- Examples: Fire, Hurricane, Tornado, Civil Unrest, Contamination, Earthquake

# Scope of the Business Continuity Plan

The BCP covers, but is not limited to, four distinct areas:

## IT Disaster Recovery Plan



- Goal: Restore critical systems and services as quickly as possible.
- Examples: Network Failure, Data Center Failure, Sabotage, Hacking/Denial of Service/Virus/Malware

# Scope of the Business Continuity Plan

The BCP covers, but is not limited to, four distinct areas:

## Crisis Management Plan



- Goal: Respond to the crisis quickly and thoroughly to mitigate harm to the corporate image and/or brand.
- Examples: Product Safety Recalls, Environmental Catastrophes

# Scope of the Business Continuity Plan

The BCP covers, but is not limited to, four distinct areas:

## Pandemic Plan



- Goal: Secure adequate internal and external resources necessary to maintain operations.
- Examples: SARS, H1N1

# Scope of the Business Continuity Plan

In addition, the BCP should cover any other potential, identifiable risks a company could face, for example, the impact of a supplier/vendor declaring bankruptcy or a negative regulatory finding against the company.

# Scope of the Business Continuity Plan

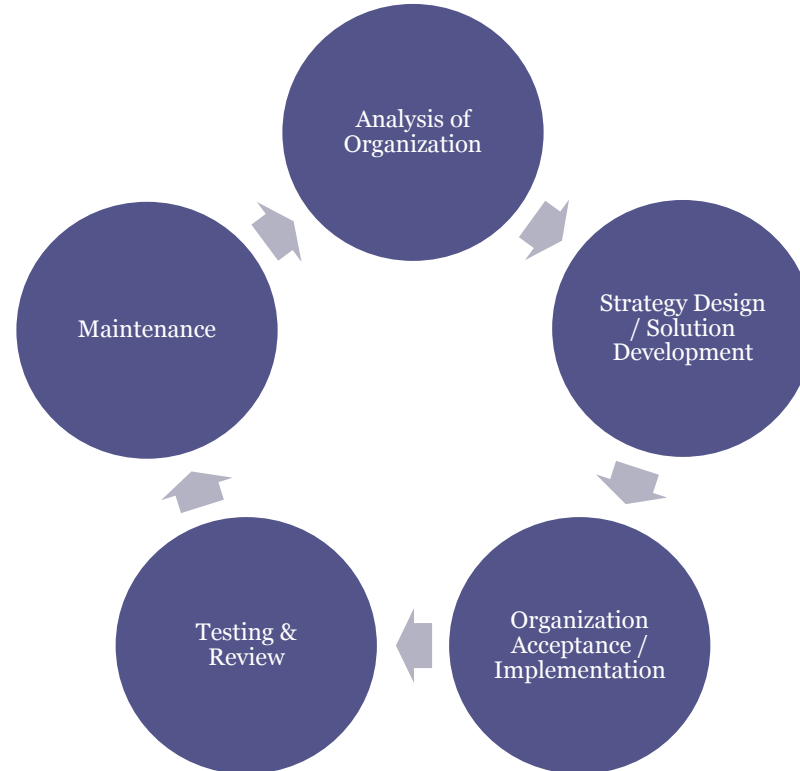
Many companies assign stewardship of their various plans to the most relevant organizational units. For example:

Plan	Steward
IT Disaster Recovery Plan	IT Department
Emergency Management Plan	Facilities Department
Crisis Management Plan	Corporate Affairs Department
Pandemic Plan	Human Resources Department

The Business Continuity Plan overlays all other plans, and provides criteria and direction for the development and execution of all plans.

# Developing and Maintaining the Business Continuity Plan

The Business Continuity Planning life cycle contains five distinct components:



# Developing and Maintaining the Business Continuity Plan

## **Analysis of Organization**

The initial discovery and analysis process is crucial. All critical business functions must be identified and detailed, a detailed Roles & Responsibilities Matrix must be created, critical vendor and supplier information (contact info/escalation paths, contract details, SLAs, etc.) must be documented, existing plans (Disaster Recovery, Emergency Response, Crisis Management, Pandemic) should be reviewed and integrated, and all potential identifiable risks to the organization must be identified.

# Developing and Maintaining the Business Continuity Plan

## Strategy Design / Solution Development

Included in a basic BCP will be the names, addresses and phone numbers for all crisis management staff and support personnel, client and vendor contact information, offsite data backup details and recall procedures, copies of all vendor service level agreements and contracts, a detailed corporate communications plan (internal and external) and any other mission-critical documentation required to maintain the company's viability. In addition, a mature BCP may contain information regarding the means of establishing new physical assets/locations, details around secondary/temporary work sites and logistics around re-establishing the supply chain.

# Developing and Maintaining the Business Continuity Plan

## Organization Acceptance / Implementation

All members of the crisis management staff and all support personnel who have a defined role in the BCP must maintain the most current version of the BCP at their residences, and will be required to participate in regular BCP testing exercises. Roles within the BCP should be listed by job title, not name, following the Company's Roles & Responsibility Matrix. A detailed contact list, including names, titles and contact information, will be included in an Appendix of the BCP. The BCP should accurately reflect the operations of the business, and should be written simply enough so that all identified participants can utilize the document during a crisis.

# Developing and Maintaining the Business Continuity Plan

## Testing & Review

Validating the effectiveness of a BCP is best done during regular, mandated testing exercises. Discovering gaps or inconsistencies in the BCP during an actual crisis or disruption could lead to a longer time-to-restore and/or an increased recovery effort. A detailed BCP testing schedule should be published and adhered to. All identified BCP participants, including key vendors/suppliers, must be involved in the BCP testing and review. Clear, detailed testing notes must be kept, and all negative testing results must be addressed.

# Developing and Maintaining the Business Continuity Plan

## **Maintenance**

Any changes to BCP participants, vendors, suppliers, or the addition/removal of any core business functions or systems necessitates revisions to the BCP. While the identified BCP Executive Sponsor is accountable for the plan, all BCP participants are responsible for maintaining the validity of the information contained in the plan, as it pertains to their role/business function.

# Adopting the Business Continuity Plan Mindset

The success of a company extends beyond a profitable product, a well-known brand name or a best-in-class service offering. Success only comes when you have a clear vision of where you want to be, an understanding of what it will take to get there, and a plan to deal with anything and everything that could stop you from achieving your goal. When companies embrace the Business Continuity Plan Mindset, risk to the business is lessened, and the likelihood of achieving company goals and objectives is significantly increased.