

PREPARING SCOTLAND

Guidance on Business Continuity Management



Assessment

Prevention

Preparation

Response

Recovery

It's Your Business



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IT'S YOUR BUSINESS

How would you cope if your offices were flooded? Would important work be lost if you experienced a lengthy power cut? What will happen if half of your workforce went down with 'flu over several weeks?

Following any serious accident or disruption could your business be up and running quickly? Could you do your job and meet the needs of your clients and customers or would your business be seriously damaged?

If you don't know the answers you should be thinking about Business Continuity Management because experience has shown that organisations with business continuity arrangements in place are more likely to stay in business and recover quickly in the event of an emergency than those who do not.

What is Business Continuity Management?

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is a process that helps people manage the risks to the smooth running of their business and aims to ensure it can continue in the event of serious disruption.

BCM is about thinking ahead and planning for any crisis and making sure that your

business can recover quickly and survive. However, the crises that affect your business are not necessarily large-scale catastrophes. Smaller events involving one or more key staff could affect critical parts of your operation. BCM is designed to ensure that a crisis does not become a disaster.

A Business Continuity Plan is a set of arrangements that enables people to manage at a time of a crisis. It helps if the plan is created by the people who know how the whole business is run.

How can you start?

A wide range of advice on business continuity is available, much of it free. The Government's Preparing for Emergencies website www.pfe.gov.uk provides extensive information for business (including Expecting the Unexpected) and links to key organisations. More detailed advice for business continuity professionals can be found at www.ukresilience.info. The site also provides links to other bodies such as the Business Continuity Institute <http://www.thebci.org/gpg.htm>.

If you do not have a Business Continuity Plan in place then consider how to make your organisation more resilient while the plan is being developed. Identify someone to lead

and consider succession planning for the loss of key personnel, organise a robust cascade system for contacting staff during the day and outside working hours. Set up an outside telephone number that staff and their relatives can use for information if your main site is out of action.

Make sure that copies of essential plans and information on business processes, data or records are stored off-site and that IT systems can be accessed from other sites. Staff may continue to work from home if they have remote access to your IT systems. Ensure that you have robust banking and financial arrangements so that you can continue to make payments and sustain your business.

What are the benefits?

Experience shows that businesses are far more likely to survive a disaster if they have thought about it in advance and planned accordingly.

Good BCM requires a detailed understanding of the business and how it works. Engaging in BCM can drive operational efficiencies for normal business.

Banks, investors, insurers, customers and suppliers are more likely to take a company that has a Business Continuity Plan more

seriously. Reduced premiums and better access to finance may give you a commercial advantage even before an event occurs.

Business Continuity Plans build employee confidence and staff will appreciate the fact that the business is doing all it can to protect their well-being and place of work.

Rapid response to an emergency can enhance your reputation and build customer confidence.

In the end, business continuity is about responsible management at all levels of a business. BCM can assist with ensuring compliance with regulations such as health and safety and supports good corporate governance.

Does a small company or voluntary organisation need a Business Continuity Plan?

Yes, every organisation (even a sole trader) is advised to have systems in place to be able to continue to work in case of matters such as fraud, theft, sabotage, flooding, fire, technological and utility failures and terrorist attacks.

Are you ready?

Can you answer “yes” to the following questions?

Does your business have a Continuity Plan?

Have you identified someone responsible for leading a crisis response?

Do you know what processes are critical to continuing in business?

Do you have arrangements to communicate with staff, or their relatives, in a crisis?

Could you cope if a large number of staff were absent?

Are your business computer records protected and backed up off-site?

Are your suppliers (including utilities) resilient with their own Business Continuity Plans?

Can you access essential equipment at short notice?

Have you tested your assumptions about recovering from a business crisis or range of emergencies that might affect your business?

If you can't answer these questions take action before it is too late. . . . It's your business.

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