

The Business Continuity Management Toolkit

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PUBLISHED BY **ark** G R O U P IN ASSOCIATION WITH **InsideKnowledge** **Managing**PARTNER

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Executive summary

FLOODS, TERRORISM, war, global economic crisis, pandemics, plane crashes and severe weather – you would think that this is a list from the Bible, yet all of these events have occurred in the past 12 months, affecting people and businesses in the UK. Some of them occurred quite literally ‘out of the blue’, whilst others were disasters in slow motion.

These incidents have created a nervous society. Clients and regulatory bodies are looking more closely at an organisation’s ability to not only recover from a disaster, but reduce the chances of a disaster occurring. Over the past ten years, clients and regulators have moved from asking about disaster recovery (what happens after the incident) to business continuity (what happens before, during and after the incident). This process is entitled business continuity management (referred to throughout this report as BCM). BCM – the ability to react to, and recover from any given event – is increasingly becoming a market differentiator and is certainly a matter for regulatory scrutiny. Those businesses which embrace BCM will undoubtedly capitalise on recovering faster than their competitors. Sympathy goes a long way when a business is impacted by a fire, but that sympathy soon runs dry when clients don’t receive the service they want and need within agreed timescales. Effective BCM will help improve a business’ reaction to incidents, ensuring people and/or services are mobilised to fix the issue and

that this is communicated to affected areas of the business. Contingency processes will reduce the impact on the business by deploying work around solutions and, finally if required, disaster recovery (DR) processes can bring the business up and running.

On small mundane incidents, BCM can help identify bottlenecks, single-points-of-failure (SPoFs) and small issues, which could be costing your organisation money everyday of the year. On larger events, BCM can help identify where your recovery efforts should be focused so that you can recover the business according to what is most vital to your survival.

Without an effective BCM in place, the decision-making process is made ‘on the fly’ and prone to mistakes, leading to delays in bringing back your business. But there is a general problem in implementing an effective BCM framework. Few people understand exactly what is required, it takes a long time to implement, tools and approaches are different (depending on the level of experience of the practitioner) and there is a perception that there has to be large costs in its development. While no two organisations are the same, the problems they face are similar and, therefore, the tools and methodology for implementation should be built on best practice and/or on proven techniques.

This report is a comprehensive step-by-step guide on implementing a successful BCM framework and discusses Business Impact Analysis (BIA), risk assessment (RA), who should be involved in the strategy and

process, what tools are needed and how they should be deployed, how to sell your business continuity strategy to decision makers, and how an effective BCM structure not only improves your performance in a crisis, but satisfies regulatory requirements, clients' needs and drives down operational losses. A business continuity strategy cannot work without strong project management and communication skills, and these often-neglected aspects of the BCM process are examined in this report.

This report covers the complete life cycle of BCM as outlined in the industry standards for business continuity – BS25999-2 and the BCI 'Good Practice Guide' (BCI GPG). It is divided into five phases which represent the key stages of a BCM strategy and framework implementation:

- Phase 1: Project management and initiation;
- Phase 2: Understanding the organisation;
- Phase 3: Practical implementation begins;
- Phase 4: Maintaining your BCP; and
- Phase 5: Embedding BCM in the organisation.

Each phase includes practical examples – both fictional and real-life – and templates to support the points discussed, so that the reader can immediately put the guidance into practice.

This report intends to be accessible to both the practitioner new to BCM as well as the more seasoned practitioner. When writing, I challenged myself to make this topic come to life as much as possible as compared to what a lot of people in the industry think, there is an exciting side to BCM, as the reader will discover.

About the author

GARY HIBBERD has been working as the risk and business continuity manager for Irwin Mitchell Solicitors LLP, a top 20 law firm in the UK for the past 18 months, but has over ten years' experience in business continuity management. Prior to joining Irwin Mitchell, he held the position of UK business continuity manager and European crisis management leader for GE Money, Europe. He helped to develop global strategies on business continuity, often travelling throughout Europe, America and Australia to demonstrate how to implement tools used to embed business continuity management in the organisation. With a background in IT and information security, Gary's experience is derived from practical application of the strategies he helps organisations develop. With a keen eye for what works and what does not, he approaches every new challenge with enthusiasm and a belief that a single positive act can make a difference.