

Attention!! Toute phrase de ce document est reprise du texte original. Il ne s'agit que d'une sélection de celles que j'ai trouvé personnellement plus « parlantes » pour résumer le sujet de l'article.

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Information security and business continuity planning

In order to ensure that an organisation maintains its competitive edge, the information must be kept confidential, accurate and continuously available.

To completely define BCP one has to consider two aspects. First, it should be ensured that an organisation could continue business as usual, or on an acceptable level in the wake of disaster. Second, IT should be restored to a state similar to that preceding the disaster.

- The aim of contingency planning is to make provision for continuing business processes in a disaster situation while recovery is taking place.
- DRP was originally intended for operations established to minimise data centre downtime. Today DRP is seen as the active component of BCP and focuses mainly on the recovery of the IT department and all related functions.

Keeping the above definitions in mind, BCP can be defined as a complete process of developing measures and procedures to ensure an organisation's disaster preparedness. This includes ensuring that the organisation would be able to respond effectively and efficiently to a disaster and that their critical business processes can continue as usual.

Business continuity planning in smaller organisations

The majority of the information relating to BCP usually discusses the development of continuity plans for large organisations, omitting how this process might differ in smaller organisations. Resources and staff are unfortunately limited, especially when it comes to smaller companies.

There might be a difference in some aspects of the BCP process for smaller organisations and some organisations might want to implement a BCP methodology in a different manner. These are because of budgeting issues and the complexity of the infrastructure, for example. Small and large organisations do, however, generally have to address the same BCP issues. Therefore, instead of having two different methodologies for small and large organisations, it would make more sense to create a methodology that is scalable to cater for all organisations. An implementation approach that allows for the implementation of only certain BCP aspects that depend on organisational requirements could also be useful.

A seven-phased business continuity planning methodology

To develop an efficient and effective business continuity plan, one must consider all the required planning issues, regardless of whether your organization is large or small. Based on a study of various existing methodologies and each one's strong and weak points, a seven-phase BCP methodology has been developed.

The project planning (PP) phase	This phase incorporates all those activities required to ensure that the BCP project is properly planned
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The business impact analysis (BIA) phase	During the BIA phase critical business processes are identified and then analyzed. Once the analysis is complete, the impact that various disasters may have on business should become clear.
The business continuity strategies (BCS) phase	This phase entails the identification of various strategies that focus on ensuring business continuity and recovery. It requires the review of the various identified disaster scenarios to develop methods to deal with these situations.
The continuity strategies implementation (CSI) phase.	For each of the strategies defined in the business continuity strategies phase, detailed functional plans must be developed with which to respond to the various scenarios.
The continuity training (CTR) phase	Business continuity training must form part of the organization's training framework and should be allocated part of the training budget. The training should be carried out as soon as the plan is complete as well as when it undergoes significant changes.
The continuity testing (CTE) phase	Testing is used to determine whether all the individual contingency plans are adequately written to ensure continuity of business processes and the recovery of the data centre.
The continuity plan maintenance (CPM) phase	It is imperative that a business continuity plan is reviewed regularly and updated if required. This is done to ensure that the plan stays effective and up to date.

A cyclic approach to methodology implementation

The concept of a cyclic approach will be introduced by means of an example. The idea behind this approach could be compared to building an outer city wall as have been done in medieval times. If, for example, it was decided that the wall should be 20 feet high, building a 20-foot section along one part of the city at a time would be impractical and would offer no protection until the whole wall is completed. However, if the wall were to be built in phases, it would provide increasing levels of protection until the wall has been completed.

The merits of such a phased approach are obvious. If the project is relatively large, but the workforce and funding are limited, it is advantageous to complete the project in various steps. An identical approach could be used towards the proposed BCP methodology implementation. It aims at dividing a methodology into four separate sections. Each section, or cycle as it is called in this approach, will have a different disaster recovery/business continuity related goal. Smaller organizations, with less complicated IT-infrastructures and less funding available to spend on BCP, may choose to only implement cycle 1 or cycle 1 and 2, for example. The cyclic approach, therefore, provides one with the option to implement a methodology in four different stages, where each stage is separate from the next.

The back-up cycle

If an organization has no access to their data after a disaster, it is virtually impossible to recover. Having an effective backup plan in place lays the foundation for further recovery efforts. For this reason the backup cycle has been chosen to initiate the implementation a BCP methodology. Although ensuring data backup and availability is the main purpose of this cycle, activities belonging to other methodology phases also need to be included.

The disaster recovery cycle

The main objective of this cycle is ensuring that IT can recover effectively following a disaster. During the continuity strategies phase one usually identifies various recovery alternatives by assessing the recovery timeframes for the most critical business processes.

The contingency planning cycle

The contingency planning cycle aims at ensuring the continuity of all critical business processes while IT is recovering. Therefore, this cycle mainly concentrates on the identification of procedures to continue each business process. The difference between this cycle and the preceding one comes into play during the continuity strategies and strategy implementation phases.

The continuity planning cycle

This cycle will concentrate on business continuity as a whole, i.e. on both recovery and business process continuation. It mainly contains the various steps that could not be directly attributed to just continuity or recovery, but rather apply to all these previously established goals or related goals.