

Business continuity management (BCM) is a process developed to counteract systems failure.



It is not just about the recovery of IT systems and services, it is an organisation wide discipline. Business continuity management is a business issue, with benefits for any organisation. Supporting the ability of the business to recover is disaster recovery.

This includes:

- Providing facilities and services to enable the business to continue to function.
- Providing critical IT applications and infrastructure necessary to support the recovery of critical processes.

Underpinning the recovery is crisis management. This ensures that:

- The most appropriate personnel are brought together to manage the immediate effects and the wider implications of an incident..
- Decisions on what should be recovered (and how this should be done) are made based on information provided by other areas of the business. For example, the IT department, Human Resources, etc.

### **ONGOING BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT**

Once a business continuity management plan has been implemented, it is the start of an ongoing commitment.

Organisations constantly evolve and change and recovery strategies must evolve with them. For example:

- Business processes change, people join, transfer and leave organisations on a regular basis. Plans should be updated to reflect changes in recovery teams.
- New IT systems are introduced to support business activities. These may be essential and, as such, the requirement to recover them must be considered before implementation.





- Ongoing training and testing is vital to ensure effective recovery.

### **BENEFITS OF BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT**

There are real business benefits to be gained from the implementation of business continuity management within any organisation. For example:

- Regulatory requirements
- Positive marketing of contingency capabilities
- Competitive advantage
- Insurance

#### **Regulatory Requirements**

In some industries a recovery capability is becoming a mandatory requirement.

For example, regulators stipulate that financial organisations must have sufficient continuity and security controls to meet the business requirements. Failure to demonstrate tested recovery facilities could result in heavy fines.

Within the service community, there is also an obligation to provide continuous services, for example, hospitals, emergency services and prisons.

#### **Positive Marketing of Contingency Capabilities**

An organisation that can demonstrate effective business continuity management capabilities will provide high service levels to clients and customers, and thus win business.

#### **Competitive Advantage**

The ability to demonstrate contingency provision for systems failure is an increasing requirement when inviting service organisations to tender for business.

A sound business continuity management plan can prove a good incentive for customers to continue a business relationship, and becomes part of the competitive advantage used to win or retain customers.



### Insurance

Effective business continuity management process can help organisations demonstrate to underwriters or insurers that they are proactively managing their business risks.

The ability to recover the business and mitigate losses is often a requirement of insurance policies. As such, organisations with comprehensive business continuity plans are lower risk, and premiums should reflect this.

Alternatively, the organisation may feel comfortable in reducing cover or even self-insuring certain areas as a result of limiting potential losses.

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