



How to choose a Business Continuity Plan Template

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Your first step is to find a Business Continuity Plan Template that fits your organization's needs. You can work through the many free templates online, or you can purchase an Online Business Continuity Plan Template from [BCP Builder](#). This will guide you through the plan writing process and store your business critical information online via a secure login.

You can view a video demonstration [here](#).

Why do you need a Business Continuity Plan?

Having a robust Business Continuity Plan can be considered insurance for the uninsurable parts of your business. Things that you can't insure against are market-share, customer confidence and reputation.

When considering disasters that could disrupt your business you may think of terrorism or fire. There are so many variations and thinking through all these scenarios can be quite overwhelming.

The good news is that it doesn't matter! When it comes to Business Continuity it's important to focus on the effect of any disruption rather than the cause. The goal is to effectively deal with any negative incidents and impacts that could impact your business. Whether it is a creeping crisis or the big bang – you need to be flexible enough to deal with both.

The probability that a disruption will strike a particular location at a particular time is very small. However, the likelihood that *some crisis* will happen *some place at some time* is significant.

Having a plan in place means you will recover faster following a disruption, because the event will have less impact on your business. If your business wasn't badly impacted (particularly if others were), you will gain increased customer confidence.

What to consider when choosing a Business Continuity Plan Template

When you are choosing your Business Continuity Plan Template, you need to ensure it includes all the following elements (to comply with ISO 22301:2012).

People (skills and knowledge)

Your staff are your most valuable asset. Therefore, your top priority during any disruption should be their safety and well being. Without staff your business will cease to exist.

If you have staff members who are a single-point of failure, you should be training people in their duties.

Consider what would happen if your staff cannot access your premises. Can they easily work from home or a pre-determined alternative location?

If your workforce is completely incapacitated (think pandemic) is there an alternative pool of resources you can draw from?

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Infrastructure

Have you considered the infrastructure in your area? There are many international examples where business premises were sound, however they couldn't be accessed due to damaged roads. If this is a risk for your company, you should establish a relocation site.

Premises (buildings and facilities)

Consider the state of your building, is all maintenance up to date? A burst pipe or leaking roof over your server room could cause a lot of damage.

Supply Chain (third party products and services)

Do you have any single-source suppliers? This means you choose to use a single supplier, even though you could spread your risk by using more than one.

[KFC's recent disruption](#) was due to their reliance on a single-source supplier of transport.

Reputation

How much damage would an extended disruption cause to your reputation?

Resources (IT, information, equipment, materials)

Consider the age and maintenance of your resources. Are you working with outdated equipment that is at risk of imminent failure?

Finances (payroll and organizational funds)

Do you have sufficient finances and cash reserves to carry you through a business disruption? If a disruption occurred on payroll day, is that a problem?

Business Impact Analysis

List the Products, Services and Activities undertaken by your organization in order of priority.

Threat Analysis

Are there any high-likelihood threats that are specific to your business or location?

Incident Response Team

Who would be the best people in your organization to respond to a crisis? Record their details as the Response Team and give them the appropriate training and plans to succeed.

Backup and Disaster Recovery

The more frequently you back up your system the more expensive it becomes. Would it matter if you lost a week of data? Do you need your systems to be replicated in real-time?

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Check that the back-ups are tested regularly. You need to be confident they will work when you need them. While your back-ups are being restored (potentially onto new hardware), you should have a manual system to fall back on.

Fallback Site

When it comes to relocating following a disruption, there are a wealth of options available. There are Workplace Recovery Sites and organizations who will manage your emergency travel and accommodation requirements.

Exercising your Plan

Once you have successfully chosen a Business Continuity Plan Template and completed the first version of your plan, you should exercise it at-least once a year. For a small company this doesn't have to be a daunting task. You could write up a brief scenario and use a table-top exercise during a meeting. The goal of the exercise would be for the Incident Response Team to discuss how they would deal with the scenario.

As the Incident Response Team work through each Incident Response Procedure they will be talking about what will work and what will not work. This discussion will produce some really valuable thoughts and discussions that should be recorded.

Community Resilience

It is important to recognize that resilience doesn't stand in isolation – businesses operate within an ecosystem with other businesses. Strengthening community resilience requires pooling and utilizing existing resources and using these to the full. This means that collaboration is vital to the effective utilization of community resources.

It is important that you speak to your neighbors; particularly if you're working in a shared building or business park. You should include their details in your Communication Plan so you can join forces following a disruption and help each other.

Consider approaching a larger business for mentoring and discuss their Business Continuity Management Strategy.

Case Study – Relocation

A private banking business with 50 staff had a Business Continuity Plan which involved getting on a plane and traveling to another country's main office in case of a disruption.

The plan was reviewed and an external supplier was found to house 24 staff at a recovery site approximately 15 miles away (but only 30 minutes by train). Consequently, the business gained confidence that they could remain at the recovery site for three months without spending a lot of money.

This solution balances the well-being of staff and their needs as well as the needs of the company. In a disruption the staff can remain near their families while still continuing to work in a different location.

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Case Study – Flooding

If you are prepared for any crisis, it can prove to be an outstanding opportunity to enhance your reputation, prove your resilience and provide opportunities for transformation.

Consider the 2000 floods in Sussex where a little town called Lewes was flooded, along with a vegetable shop called Bills. As a result of the flooding, they needed to rebuild. When they did so, they added a small café to the shop – it became very trendy, and a few years ago they sold the chain for approximately £5 million.

A brewery called Harvey's was also flooded in the same town. When they got back to the brewery they found that a brew of beer that had been in the vats was stronger than usual. Consequently, rather than throw it away they called it "Ouse Booze" (named after the river that runs by the brewery) and the proceeds of the sales were given to the flood appeal.

Choosing a Business Continuity Plan Template – Summary

Choosing an appropriate Business Continuity Plan Template is the first step in the planning process.

If you choose [BCP Builder](#) you can feel confident that your plan will meet the Business Continuity Institute Good Practice Guidelines and the requirements of ISO 22301:2012.

Being able to detect, prevent, or respond to any event can give your organization an edge.

"Resilience helps companies compete, even in the face of true unknown-unknown disruptions. Resilience comes as a result of vigilance, responsiveness, and flexibility to detect and respond to unexpected events quickly and effectively" Sheffi.