

10 things you should know about Business Continuity Management



1. People support what they help create

This is especially true for Business Continuity Management. All employees should have a basic understanding of the principles of business continuity management, and its importance to the company. Employees should also be actively involved in the planning process for their own business unit. If the board is worried that BCM will be seen as another short term fad that won't keep the interest of staff then make sure that all employees are involved in its development.

2. Business Continuity Management is not the same as Disaster Recovery

BCM aims to proactively manage all business processes, assets, facilities, supply chains and human resources to ensure that the business will function at its highest capacity. This is distinct from disaster recovery-based planning which concentrates on ensuring that IT contingency plans and procedures are in place to return to business as usual as soon as possible after a crisis. Business continuity management does not neglect disaster recovery, but it sees it as a sub category.

3. Business Continuity Management is not just about the plans

Remind the board that BCM will address those issues that place the company at risk. Since these are the issues that the board deals with everyday and are linked to the strategic goals of the company then the board will 'get' why it is important. Then work with them to identify the support functions necessary to deliver those goals and base your BCM around those. As General Eisenhower said 'When planning for war, I have always found plans to be useless, but planning to be invaluable.'



4. Business Continuity Management can help differentiate companies

Having a BCM programme in place means you can illustrate to customers or clients how you may be able to recover your operation within just a few hours if you were say to lose your capability to operate from your existing location. When you are confident of this, it is then easy to ask them to consider if your competitors have the same capability.

5. Doing Business Continuity Management can save you money across the business

The planning that goes into a BCM programme, especially the business impact analysis, can often be a way of taking stock of an entire organization's processes. This better understanding of an organisation can lead to the improvement and streamlining of processes and potentially even cost reductions.

6. Having good Business Continuity Management is great for your reputation even after an adverse event

The effective handling of any incident – particularly a large-scale one – can have a positive effect on a company's market value. Successfully navigating a potentially devastating incident can significantly increase customer confidence in an organisation. In the case of an industry-wide incident, a company may be judged against its competitors on how the incident is managed. By successfully handling a business continuity incident when its competitors fail a company will stand-out in the market.



7. Your IT infrastructure costs may be too high

There are rising costs associated with running any business, particularly as it becomes more dependent on increasingly complex and expensive IT infrastructures. One expense is that associated with storage area networks and the memory used by them. An area for potential savings is this expenditure on IT storage. A Business Continuity Management programme helps identify the critical storage needs of an organisation. IT departments often over resource and the BCM programme can to (delete) be invaluable, helping to focus and reduce IT budgets.



8. Insurance may not cover all your losses

There are some things that business interruption insurance will most likely not cover. Things such as loss of business opportunities, loss of reputation, the cost of losing current business customers, the erosion of brand value and new products and services being delayed or cancelled. It will only provide some limited financial protection but will not ensure that the organisation survives.

9. Lower insurance premiums

Insurance companies and brokers now realise that Business Continuity Management helps with risk reduction, and it is becoming increasingly common for a condition of insurance cover to show the existence of a business continuity plan. Even if an insurer does not insist on such a condition, organisations are now finding that they can often keep premiums down if they have a proven BCM programme.



10. It's a very security conscious thing to do!

The scandals that have rocked the business world either side of the Atlantic have further highlighted the importance of company security in maintaining the integrity of data and financial reports. It is always difficult to legislate for crimes committed from the inside, and detecting fraudulent behaviour, often by employees with vast knowledge of the particular systems, is even more troublesome. However Business Continuity Management can provide protection against this threat. Whilst this isn't a foolproof defence it may be helpful. As Eliza Manningham-Buller, Director General of MI5, said: "I am often asked what single piece of advice I can recommend that would be most helpful to the business community. My answer is a simple, but effective, business continuity plan that is regularly reviewed and tested".