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Steps to follow to create a business continuity plan

Preparing early helps you react quickly during a crisis, but creating a continuity plan takes time. Breaking down the process into these five steps helps you stay organized while you develop your plan:

Step 1: Conduct an impact analysis on your business

During this step, you should identify critical systems and processes that your business needs to keep operating. Talk to key stakeholders, including members of each department within your company, to find out what each part of your organization needs to maintain normal operations. Determine your overall objectives for continuity, including whether you need specific systems to return to full operation right away or whether some parts of your business can operate at reduced capacity for a while.

Step 2: Identify your business continuity team

Choose specific managers and employees to create and implement your business continuity plan. You may want to hire someone as a business continuity manager to oversee the process. You might also include business continuity under the larger umbrella of [operations management](#) in your company and assign this duty accordingly.

Step 3: Compile a formal business continuity plan

Create a formal document that outlines each action and who is responsible for that action during an emergency. Keep this document in an easily accessible location for reference during an adverse event.

Step 4: Gather the resources necessary for plan implementation

If your business continuity plan includes switching suppliers temporarily or rebuilding your facilities after a disaster, make sure you create a list of alternate suppliers and obtain insurance on your facilities to cover the cost of repairs. You might also need to develop alternate manual procedures and processes for things that are usually automated.

Step 5: Implement training and testing of your business continuity plan

Hold regular tests of your continuity plan with all of your employees so everyone knows what to do in an emergency. This helps train your business continuity team and lets you evaluate the plan. You may discover that you missed something essential during the planning and need to revise part of the plan.

Sample business continuity plan template

Here is a sample business continuity plan:

Business Name: The Widget Corporation

Department: IT

Prepared by: John Smith

Date prepared: June 15, 2020

Location: 100 Jones St., Clearwater, FL

Introduction: This part explains the purpose of the continuity plan and how to use it

Organizational structure: This part of the plan lists the members of the business continuity team and what each person's role is on the team. It can also include information about departmental support teams that will report to the business continuity team in the event of an actual disaster.

Scope of the plan: This section describes the scope of the continuity plan, including what departments it covers and the specific risks it addresses.

Disaster response process: This part of the document outlines the specific steps taken in response to a disaster. It includes sections on how to determine a disaster condition, how to initiate the procedures in the business continuity plan, how to handle public relations involving the disaster and steps needed for damage assessment after the disaster.

Recovery process: This section lists the steps necessary for returning to normal operation after the disaster. It may include alternate plans for various scenarios so your managers can shift to different suppliers, move to a new facility or start using a backup network as needed.



[Company Logo Delete or Replace]

Preparation and training: This part of the business continuity plan lists regular steps to take to remain prepared for disasters. It might include a schedule for periodic updates of emergency contact information and annual testing and training.

Notification list: This section of the document provides up-to-date contact information for everyone who needs notification during a disaster. It might also list a chain of notification to indicate who receives what information first.

The timeframe for action: This is a detailed timeline of when each part of the response and recovery activities should take place. It should describe what should be happening within 24 hours of the disaster, within a week of the event and within the month after the disaster took place.

Additional information: In this section, you can include anything not covered by earlier sections, such as information about your suppliers' disaster recovery procedures, forms for tracking disaster-related expenses and reference documents required to implement your continuity plan.

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