

Business Continuity Planning: Ten Common Mistakes

With firms increasing reliance on connectivity, mobility and productivity business continuity planning (BCP) has become a major initiative for emerging enterprises.

Did you know that 60 percent of the businesses affected by a disaster will not survive because they do not have a recovery plan in place?

Common mistakes include:

1. **Reliance Without Testing:** Relying on a BCP can lead to a false sense of security and potential business failure if the plan is not updated regularly and fully tested. In addition, recovery personnel must be trained on plan-execution and employees must be aware of the plan's provisions.
2. **Scope:** Companies often limit the scope of their efforts to systems recovery. Business continuity planning requires consideration of a) data, b) databases, c) applications, and d) business process and systems recovery.
3. **Prioritization:** A formal process prioritizing key business processes is a critical step that often does not get enough attention by management. Without prioritization, a plan may recover less-than-critical business processes rather than the ones crucial for survival.
4. **Plan Update:** Formal mechanisms are not in place to force a plan update on a regular basis or when significant systems or business process change occurs.
5. **Ownership:** Senior management often appoints the wrong person to manage the BCP process; someone with the power to lead, influence, support, prioritize and organize the project should be named.
6. **Communications:** Communications issues are often overlooked. Formal plans to contact employees, vendors, business partners and clients often lack specific communications strategies. Strategies to address how-to obtain recovery status updates are often inadequate.
7. **Security:** Information systems security controls are often disregarded during plan development, resulting in a greater risk exposure during recovery operations. For example, storing tapes onsite or at an employee's home can prove disastrous.
8. **Public Relations:** Practitioners often fail to plan for public relations and investor considerations, therefore missing the opportunity to limit perceived impact by the public and investors.
9. **Insurance:** Many BCPs fail to adequately plan to support the filing of insurance claims resulting in delayed or reduced settlements.

10. **Service Evaluation:** Many companies poorly evaluate recovery products (relying on vendor-supplied information). This often leads to a solution that may not adequately address a company's needs.

Companies that avoid these ten common BCP pitfalls significantly increase their odds of a successful and timely resumption of business and information technology operations.

ABOUT SERENITY SYSTEMS

Serenity Systems improves business performance of enterprises with ERP systems. Through Serenity's Certification (based on Microsoft's Infrastructure Optimization model) business goals are supported by the IT infrastructure and ERP system while management is provided with peace-of-mind via user, network, and systems support with performance visualizations. Founded in 2002, Serenity Systems has provided nearly a hundred enterprises with high-impact business-centric technology solutions in support of their business goals.

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