

What is the best way to go about Business Continuity Planning?

Advisor's opinion

Business continuity planning is a major project and effective project management is essential in ensuring the efforts of a team drawn from all parts of the organisation are deployed effectively.

In the normal course of events when commencing such a project we would propose the following as the most efficient way to launch the process.

The first step in the process would be the completion of a Threat and Vulnerability Matrix. On completion, the project team select from the threats with the highest likelihood and develop typical scenarios of how the threats might materialise. It is also useful to quantify the scale of impact and identify who should be responsible or accountable for dealing with each situation.

The idea is that the scenario provides a realistic and sensible interpretation of the type of situation which could have a significant impact on the day-to-day business of the organisation. Once the scenarios had been defined the approach is then to develop action plans

capable of responding to these likely scenarios.

Draw up how your business works, what the business areas are and what each area needs to function correctly. Don't overlook non-IT issues such as buildings, desks, documentation and staff. Then look at the measures already in place to cope with problems, if any, and whether they are enough. Lastly, try to understand the cost of an area not being able to do its job within a certain amount of time. This information will drive everything else.

The action plans for each scenario are normally then linked to the relevant resources, be they people, facilities, or infrastructures, which are required to perform the planned actions. Ideally the majority of these actions would be supported by procedures setting out how a particular task is to be performed. These could be anything, from contacting staff to notifying local support services such as NHS or local authority, or any of the other myriad tasks which would need to be carried out.



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