READINESS RESOURCES

Federal Emergency Management Agency -- www.fema.gov
- Emergency Management Guide for Business & Industry:
  www.fema.gov/pdf/business/guide/bizindst.pdf

Department of Homeland Security
- READY America – www.ready.gov/business
- PS-Prep - www.fema.gov/ps-preptm-voluntary-private-sector-preparedness

American Red Cross – www.redcross.org/prepare

National Weather Service – www.nws.noaa.gov

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
- Emergency Preparedness & Response: http://emergency.cdc.gov/

Institute for Business and Home Safety
- Open for Business Brochure (PDF): http://disastersafety.org/open-for-business/

Public Entity Risk Institute (PERI) – www.riskinstitute.org

Attainium Corp -- www.attainium.net
- Plan-A-ware - Collaborative, Web-based Business Continuity Planning:
  www.attainium.net/planaware
- Business Continuity NewsBriefs: www.attainium.net/newsbriefs/
- Related Articles: www.attainium.net/topics.php?topicId=20

Books:
- "Avoiding Disaster" by John Laye

- "Blindsided – A Manager's Guide to Catastrophic Incidents in the Workplace
    by Bruce T. Blythe

- "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Natural Disasters" by Laura Harrison McBride

- "The Unthinkable – Who Survives When Disaster Strikes and Why?" by Amanda Ripley

Principles of Emergency Management

Awareness

- Activities to identifying what COULD happen…
- Threats, hazards, vulnerabilities

Preparation

- Activities performed to "GET READY"

Mitigation

- Activities to reduce or eliminate the disruption

Response

- Activities to occur during or just after the disruption

Recovery

- Activities to return the organization to "normal"

Developing a Continuity Plan

Many organizations have plans for coping with crisis and dealing with disruption. The true question is "Will our plan really work when disaster strikes?" Short of creating a major disturbance of your own (like pouring a soft drink into the file server or spreading a mysterious white powder around the office), testing and exercising provides an effective means to evaluate your preparedness.

A Simple Guide for Developing a Continuity Plan (if you don't already have one)

1. Project Initiation
   - Define goals, objectives, scope, cost and management
   - Select the Project Team

2. Risk Assessment
   - Identify threats & hazards
   - Determine the probability and impact

3. Impact Analysis
   - Identify critical functions and the infrastructure that supports them
   - Develop Recovery Time Objectives (RTO)
   - Determine weak links and critical paths

4. Emergency Response
   - Preserve life and personal safety
   - Evacuation or shelter in place strategy
   - Communication – internal and external

5. Recovery Strategies
   - What does it take to get "back to normal"?

6. Formal Plan Development
   - Write it all down
   - Layout should be easy to use

7. Training & Awareness
   - Make sure ALL stakeholders are aware and understand the plan

8. Exercise the Plan
   - Conduct regular drills and exercises
   - "What Would We Do If…?"

9. Keeping the Plan Current
   - Scheduled reviews and ongoing maintenance

Continuity Plan Outline

Overview
- Objectives
- Strategy
- Assumptions

Incident Response
- Incident Management Procedures
- Disaster Declaration Procedures
- Crisis Management Team
- Notification Procedures
- Evacuation Procedures
- Shelter in Place Procedures
- Emergency Telephone Numbers

Critical Tasks to Business Resumption
- Day 1
- Day 2
- Days 3 -7
- Week 2
- Week 3
- Weeks 4 and beyond

Plan Specifications
- Alternate Sites
- Hardware Requirements
- Software Requirements
- Office Equipment Inventory
- Vital Records Inventory
- Vendor Contacts
- Insurance Information
- Testing Procedures
- Training Procedures
- Maintenance Procedures
- Appendices
    - Floor plans
    - Network diagrams
    - Other related documents
    - Employee List(s)

Questions of Readiness

1. Have you conducted a vulnerability or risk assessment in the last 12 months? Where are you susceptible to disruption and/or damage?

2. Who is on your Emergency Response Team?

3. Who is on your Crisis Management Team?

4. What is your official Chain of Command down to the 6th level?

5. What is in your Emergency Kits?
    a. Flashlights
    b. Portable radios
    c. Fresh batteries
    d. Whistle or air-horn
    e. Walkie-Talkies - all set to the same channel
    f. First Aid supplies
    g. Bottled water

6. Do you have NOAA Weather Radios?

7. How frequently do you refresh the contents of your First Aid and Emergency Kits?

8. Do you have an up to date Evacuation Plan?

9. Do you have an up to date Shelter in Place Plan?

10. Do you have an up to date Communications Plan? Does it cover:
    a. Staff
    b. Customers / Guests
    c. Your leadership – Board, Senior Management, etc.
    d. Media

11. Do you know your primary and secondary evacuation routes?

12. How will you handle the movement of staff, guests, and customers should transportation be disrupted?

13. Can you accommodate the safe shelter in place of all your staff & guests? If so, where?

14. Do you have the necessary supplies, food, water, etc. to accommodate your staff / guests during a shelter in place?

15. Do you have sufficient medically trained personnel and facilities available?

16. How will you handle people with special needs?
    a. Physical disabilities
    b. Impaired hearing or sight
    c. Pregnancy
    d. Elderly

17. Have you conducted drills to determine how long it will take to:
    a. Evacuate
    b. Shelter in place

18. Do you have a Staff Information Packet to provide essential information on your readiness plans, policies and procedures? This should set expectations of how you will respond and what is expected of your staff.

19. How will you protect your vital records?

20. What are your policies and procedures regarding security?

21. At what point will you fill up your vehicles, generators, etc. with fuel?

22. Where do you turn for official and up to date on severe weather or other major disasters?

23. What are your procedures for providing readiness training for staff?
    a. Frequency of the training
    b. Types of training – exercises, drills, awareness training, etc.
    c. First Aid, CPR, CERT

24. When was the last time your insurance coverage was reviewed? Is your coverage appropriate and sufficient?

25. Do you have cash & credit cards on hand for emergency purchases?

26. Have you established mutual aid agreements with other area businesses and resources?

27. Have you established relationships with your local first responders?
    a. Police
    b. Fire Department
    c. County & State Emergency Management Agencies

28. Have you relocated or re-designed critical facilities to get them out of harm's way?

29. Have you modified your building's architecture to make it less susceptible to damage?

30. Do you have backup / redundant communications, power and other critical utilities?

31. Are your computer systems backed up and protected?

32. Have you installed quick disconnect fittings for electrical, hydraulic & plumbing lines?

33. Do you have sufficient materials available to secure vulnerable windows and doors in the event of severe weather?

34. Can any hazardous materials in the facility be safely and easily secured?

35. Are you prepared to provide transportation for your staff to and/or from an evacuation shelter or their residences?

36. Will you conduct a post-disaster review of your awareness, preparation, mitigation, response and recovery efforts?

37. What will you do to improve your efforts prior to the next "disruption"?

# # #

Training, Testing and Exercising (TT&E)
By Bob Mellinger, President, Attainium Corp

Once a business continuity or emergency response plan is created, an organization often feels the job is done and gets a bit complacent. When your plan is complete and placed on the shelf, however, the job is far from over. It's like fire drills… you don't plan one and never test the escape routes. We've all done fire drills and learned from them, and no one disputes the need to continue to do fire drills on a regular basis. We have to develop the same attitude about testing business continuity plans.

Why test the plan? There's the obvious reason, of course – to make sure it works. But TT&E also gives you an opportunity to evaluate the skills of everyone involved and to improve their skills, to make sure that all contingencies have been covered, to satisfy any policies or legal requirements, and to help keep the plan updated.

To be effective, a plan must be (1) accessible and (2) a dynamic document that constantly evolves to reflect changes in the environment, staffing, regulation, policies and procedures. If you're not going to test the plan regularly to keep it current and ensure its viability, you might as well throw it away after a few months. What happens, for example, when a disruption occurs, and someone goes to the plan to find out whom to contact, only to discover that the person in charge left the company six months ago? Finally, the plan has to be easy to use. Don't make it easier for people to run for the door that to locate the correct procedure in the plan (of course, if the plan is tested and people are trained, this shouldn't be an issue).

Plan accessibility is an important issue. Everyone has to know what and where the plans are, who's in charge of what, processes for different types of disruptions. Notebooks are often used, either placed in strategic locations or provided to each department or manager. There also are software programs that make it possible to access and update the plan via the desktop. Whose desktop has access to the plan? If it's the manager and his computer is down, now what? What happens if the power goes out and the plan is now inaccessible? (You have to plan for disruptions in accessing your plan.) Do you have a way to remotely access the plan? Should you have a Web site you can access from any computer to make sure the information remains accessible? TT&E, when done right, also can surface problems with access to the plan.

Training and Testing Programs

A comprehensive TT&E program would encompass a number of components, including:

- Executive briefings for senior management that would familiarize them with the business continuity plan and policy, the emergency response and disaster recovery plan currently in place, and an explanation of their roles.

- Seminars for managers to familiarize them with the plan and explain what is expected of them and their staff to prepare for and respond to a crisis or disaster.

- Literature for all staff to inform them of business continuity news and events.

- Most important, workshops for crisis management and recovery team members, including scenario exercises and role-play sessions. These can take many forms as described below.

Training, Testing and Exercising (TT&E) – cont'd

There are basically five types of exercises that test your plan and allow you to evaluate its effectiveness. These include the orientation, the drill, the tabletop exercise, the functional exercise, and the full-scale exercise. The primary objective of the testing is to determine whether or not your plan can successfully respond to the crisis and restore one or more business-critical processes in the allotted time. Below are descriptions of these exercises, based on FEMA's definition of each.

(1) Orientation. An orientation is an informal session that does not include any simulation. It provides a discussion of roles and responsibilities and introduces or reinforces policies, procedures and plans.

(2) Drill. Think of the fire drill… this is a test of one function only. This is usually done "in the field" and is often evaluated.

(3) Tabletop. This takes the form of a discussion of a simulated emergency. It's inexpensive, low stress, and has no time limits. This exercise can help you evaluate plans and processes and review any issues with coordination and responsibility.

(4) Functional. This is a realistic simulation that takes place in real time and can be quite stressful. Inputs are made via message at points throughout the simulations. All key personnel should be involved in order to get a realistic reading on the plan. It can test one or more emergency management or response functions or the entire plan.

(5) Full-scale. This type of exercise features a specific emergency scenario using real people and equipment. It takes place in real-time and, done correctly, causes high levels of stress. It is designed to test many/all of the emergency response functions.

A critical result of testing the plan, no matter what method you use, is to incorporate the lessons learned into the plan and making sure all relevant personnel receive the updates. In fact, holding a Monday-morning quarterbacking session after the test is a good way to surface the problems and determine how to incorporate changes into the plan.

Your entire plan should be tested on an annual basis to ensure its viability. But you don't have to test the entire plan at a time; you can test pieces of it over the course of the year to save time and money.

It is a major challenge to keep your plan updated, but that plan is critical to your ability to keep your organization – and, most important, your people – alive. A carefully constructed plan can save lives, prevent total chaos in the face of a crisis or disaster, and quite is a critical tool to guide an organization's recovery and survival.

Bob Mellinger is the president of Attainium Corp, which delivers business continuity, preparedness and crisis management services. Bob is a frequent speaker on the topics including Business Continuity, Contingency Planning and Crisis Management, delivering sessions ranging from the basics of Continuity Planning to the Impact of Today's Threats and Hazards to tabletop exercises and disaster simulations.

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