

The

# 7 STEP GUIDE

*for Building*

Business Continuity Plans  
that Actually Work.



# How to Build a Comprehensive Continuity Plan in 7 Steps

*Created by: The Chesley Brown Group*

Simply put, a business continuity plan (BCP) is an important business document that outlines how a business will maintain its critical operations before, during, and after an emergency event or disruption. Emergency events can include natural disasters, workplace violence, system failures, cyber-attacks, supply-chain interruptions, economic downturns, or any event that will result in the disruption of business operations. The following guide is designed to help you build or update your own comprehensive business continuity plan.

It goes without saying that the past few months have been some of the toughest of our lifetimes. The economy is lurching toward reopening while some states are shutting back down. Racial justice protests are still popping up in every major city, and, on top of all that; you're being bombarded with an ever evolving list of compliance questions about financials, hiring, reopening, social distancing, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). With so many things in the air, it can start to feel like you're juggling chainsaws. Employees are scared, stakeholders are spooked, and customers aren't spending like they were. Everyone is looking for a leader who can cut through the fog and chart a clear path forward with confidence and foresight.

Does this sound familiar? You're not alone. It really is chilling to think about what a crisis can do to your financial goals or company's reputation. Whether you're a small business owner or the CEO of a multinational corporation, the last several months have demonstrated why it is crucial to have a plan for how you will retain customers and protect your assets in times of crisis. Businesses are being forced to make real-time decisions on things they never even considered previously. It's hard to know where to begin.

Luckily, with a little planning, many of these worries can be put to rest. In thirty years of business our security experts have seen a crisis or two. From the bombing at the Olympic games in Atlanta, to the recent coronavirus outbreak, we have been on the frontlines. That's why we built a framework that helps organizations of all sizes anticipate and navigate risk before it becomes a crisis. Having a business continuity plan in place will ensure your business is able to function before, during, and after the next crisis. A clear plan will also help you solve the toughest challenges facing your organization with resilience and resolve.



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## What is a BCP?

A Business Continuity Plan (BCP) will clearly define the people and policies needed to keep your business running when the worst happens. A Business Continuity Plan is useful because:

- It provides a sense of security for managers and staff.
- It will allow your business to provide reasonable service to your clients during and after an emergency.
- It will allow you to maintain your revenue growth and improve your reputation.

## What Should Be Included In A Business Continuity Plan

Business continuity plans are as varied and complicated as the organizations themselves. Every plan is unique and must be based on the specific needs of your company and customers. Here are a few examples of what a BCP must include:

- The scope and cause of your plan
- Your plan's desires and objectives
- A complete listing of obligations required to keep your operations going
- The roles and obligations of your BCM crew and your staff
- The contact information for management and key BCM staff
- Maintenance protocols in your plan
- Information about web, website and facts backups
- Information on where to move in an emergency
- Procedures to coordinate with emergency personnel

Don't wait for a catastrophe to create a continuity plan. If your company doesn't have a comprehensive crisis management plan, or hasn't updated it in the last year, you could be placing the entire business in jeopardy. Here are 7 fundamental steps you need to take when creating a Business Continuity Plan for your business.

### **Step 1:** Establish the Scope of Your Plan

The first step in creating a comprehensive business continuity plan is to identify the objectives of your plan and then set goals accordingly. Here you will be considering how detailed your plan should be and which departments and staff members should be involved?

When creating the scope of your plan, you should also define the successful outcome of your plan and which milestones should be tracked during an emergency situation.



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## Step 2: Form the business continuity management team

Your company's business continuity team will implement and execute the Business Continuity Plan. You should base the composition of your team on the requirements of your organization and how you expect to roll out the plan. At a minimum, your business continuity team should always include a team leader, a spokesperson and a board member, a manager, assistant manager, and administrative assistant from each department.

### Command and Control Teams:

- Business continuity facilitation
- Crisis management
- Recovery management

### Task-Orientated Teams:

- Finance
- Human Resources
- Internal Communications
- Legal
- Customer relations
- Supply chain management
- Disaster recovery
- Information technology

Your BCP should include the title and contact information of each of the team members listed above. If applicable, you may want to specify backup contacts.

These people will put together standards for implementation, they will also train additional team members, and help guide the project forward. If you work for a medium to large sized enterprise, you will probably need to include additional team members and delegate duties accordingly. Every company is different, however, your team should have at the minimum, one representative from each department. If you would like more information on building your business continuity team, I highly recommend you take a look at our article "[10 Steps for Building a Crisis Management Communication Plan](#)".

## Step 3: Identify key areas and critical business functions

The next step in building your business continuity plan is to identify your company's core needs. Here you need to choose which business processes are most crucial and which would cause the most harm to the organization if they fail. This includes anything that would impair your company's ability to operate, damage the company's reputation, and cause major revenue loss.



To gain a better understanding of your vital processes, classify each of these capabilities or strategies as either:

- High
- Medium
- Low

Find out which business goals they support, how frequently they occur, which departments do they affect, and what other areas of the business depends on those to function? Creating diagrams using a tool like LucidCharts can help visualize complex systems, and identify bottlenecks or inefficiencies.

#### **Step 4:** Conduct a Business Impact Analysis

The next step is understanding the operational, monetary, and physical risks your business is most likely to encounter. You can determine these types of risks through a “Business Impact Analysis” (BIA).

At its core, an impact analysis helps agencies anticipate specific risks to operations, financial performance, reputation, employees, and supply chains. In short, a BIA is an excellent starting point for risk identification and assessment.

Have your group brainstorm a list of risks and threats to your business. Once you’ve created a list of potential threats, discuss how these could affect operations and prioritize the most likely and impactful scenarios. Don’t be afraid to play the long game and think in terms of 5 years or 10 years down the road.

Business impact analyses are complicated and usually require a comprehensive questionnaire to collect the information you’ll need. We’ve put together a sample business impact questionnaire to help you gain a better understanding of essential business practices, interdependencies among stakeholders, supply chain dependencies, estimated time needed to recover operations, and minimum staffing required to support operations as normal.

Once you’ve collected the questionnaire responses, review them with your team and conduct follow-up interviews to validate facts and fill any knowledge gaps.



## Areas of Evaluation

Emergencies don't wait for planning. And no organization is immune from small or wide scale impact because of emergencies. Through ongoing training and preparation, employees can maintain their readiness to play integral roles for deployment during times of critical need. In combination with other specialized personnel such as Critical Response Teams. The following is a list of the most common areas of evaluation during critical events for assuring continuity.

### ACTIVATION & CAUSATION FACTORS:

- Natural Disasters
- Man Made Disasters
- Health Emergencies, Epidemics
- Civil Disturbances
- Active Shooter or other Critical Incidents
- Acute or Escalating Trends/Threats
- Unplanned/Widespread Loss of Personnel

### EVALUATION AREAS FOR CONTINUITY:

- Interior Security
- Electronic Systems
- Alarm Systems
- Floor/Office Access Control
- Cameras, Motion Detectors and Light Sensors
- Security Intercoms and/or Phones
- Elevators
- Signage and Labeling
- Guard and/or Patrol Services
- Company Property/Equipment Security
- Overall Security Management
- Communications
- Social Media Monitoring/Response
- Finances/Payroll
- HR Support

### C-SUITE CONTINUITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Access/Media Presence
- Social Media/Cyber Exposure
- Transportation
- Travel - Local, Regional, International
- Office/Residence Access/Safeguards

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS DURING CONTINUITY DEPLOYMENTS:

- Walkways, fencing, gates, roof/roof access, vent controls
- Pedestrian/vehicle patterns
- Lighting
- Communications
- Guard Patrol and/or Security Vehicle
- Key Control and Locks
- Security Control Room
- Bomb Threat Procedures
- Office Access, Lock Down Procedures
- After Hours Ingress and Egress
- Internal Incidents, Tracking and Evaluation
- Critical Incident Awareness & Response
- Needed Supplies & PPE requirements
- Decontamination
- Medical Directives & Bulletins
- Group/Mass Transportation
- POST Orders
- Quarantine Procedures
- Remote Monitoring Capabilities/Access



## Step 5: Identify resources needed with a gap analysis

By now, your business continuity team has carried out an impact evaluation, which identified and documented a variety of potential risks to your organization. Your evaluation may have discovered discrepancies among the resources you have available and the resources you will need. This is the perfect time to do what's known as a "gap analysis."

A gap analysis identifies an organization's recovery needs versus its current resources. It also helps establish recovery alternatives and agreed-upon strategies. After your evaluation is complete, your team should clearly understand your business' needs and can begin crafting recovery policies and best practices.

## Step 6: Develop, detail and implement strategies

**This will likely be the most comprehensive section of your entire business continuity plan.** Knowing the risks to your organization is important, however knowing how you will react and recover to each is crucial to bouncing back after an unanticipated event. At this point your goal is to identify recovery techniques for your business and document how your company will implement them. Once your business is affected by a disaster and losses grow, it can be exponentially more difficult to recover without a plan. To illustrate, discuss the subsequent questions with your team:

- If our facility or equipment becomes damaged, how will we continue to meet demand for merchandise or services?
- Do we have a way to keep HR, manufacturing, sales, and support employees working after a disaster?
- If our facilities are impacted by a natural disaster, will employees work at home or at an alternate location? Do we have the infrastructure to support that?

You should discuss questions like these with your entire team and throughout your Business Continuity Plan. For every disaster situation listed in your impact analysis, be sure to document any questions and answers uncovered during the analysis.

To help you stay organized you can break down operational activities into four categories:

- **Prevention Strategies**
  - Preventative strategies are actions that will be taken before a disruption occurs. This may encompass creating remote work solutions for your employees, having backup utility providers, opportunity community resources, statistics backups, and server backups.
- **Response Strategies**



- Response strategies are wanted when there may be an emergency or sudden disruption of business. This phase would detail what every member of your commercial enterprise continuity team should do in the event of an emergency. This consists of evacuation procedures, safety protocols, and staff communications.
- **Recovery Strategies**
  - Recovery strategies ensure that important commercial enterprise approaches are restored after an emergency event or foremost disruption in commercial enterprise. Your plan needs to have a detailed description of the actions necessary to preserve your commercial enterprise functional until all personal, systems, and centers are operational again.
- **Maintenance Strategies**
  - Maintenance strategies ensure that any important policies outlined in the plan are disseminated throughout the organization and that proper training and compliance procedures are followed. Training should include a basic overview of your BCP as well as relevant and tactical exercises designed to test your continuity procedures. It may be worth staging a mock emergency to establish the efficacy of your plan and highlight areas of needed improvement.

## **Step 7:** Plan, Test, Analyze, Prioritize, Optimize, Repeat.

A Business Continuity Plan is never complete insofar that a business's risks and needs are never static. Like the business, risks evolve and shift as the company grows. Therefore, it is necessary to test your continuity plan often, to ensure effectiveness and to make improvements.

With so many sources on the internet, it's hard to know where to begin. Many business owners struggle to fully grasp the myriad risks they face. That's why we've built a framework that teaches businesses how to anticipate and navigate risk before it becomes a crisis.





# Business Continuity Plan Template

[[COMPANY NAME]]

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Created by: [[Your Name]]

Date Updated: ##/##/##

COMPANY ADDRESS

[[Property Address]]

E : [[YourName]]@ChesleyBrown.com

P : (123) 456.7890

W : www.yoursite.com

CONFIDENTIAL



# Program Administration

Define the scope, objectives, and working assumptions of the overall Business Continuity Plan.



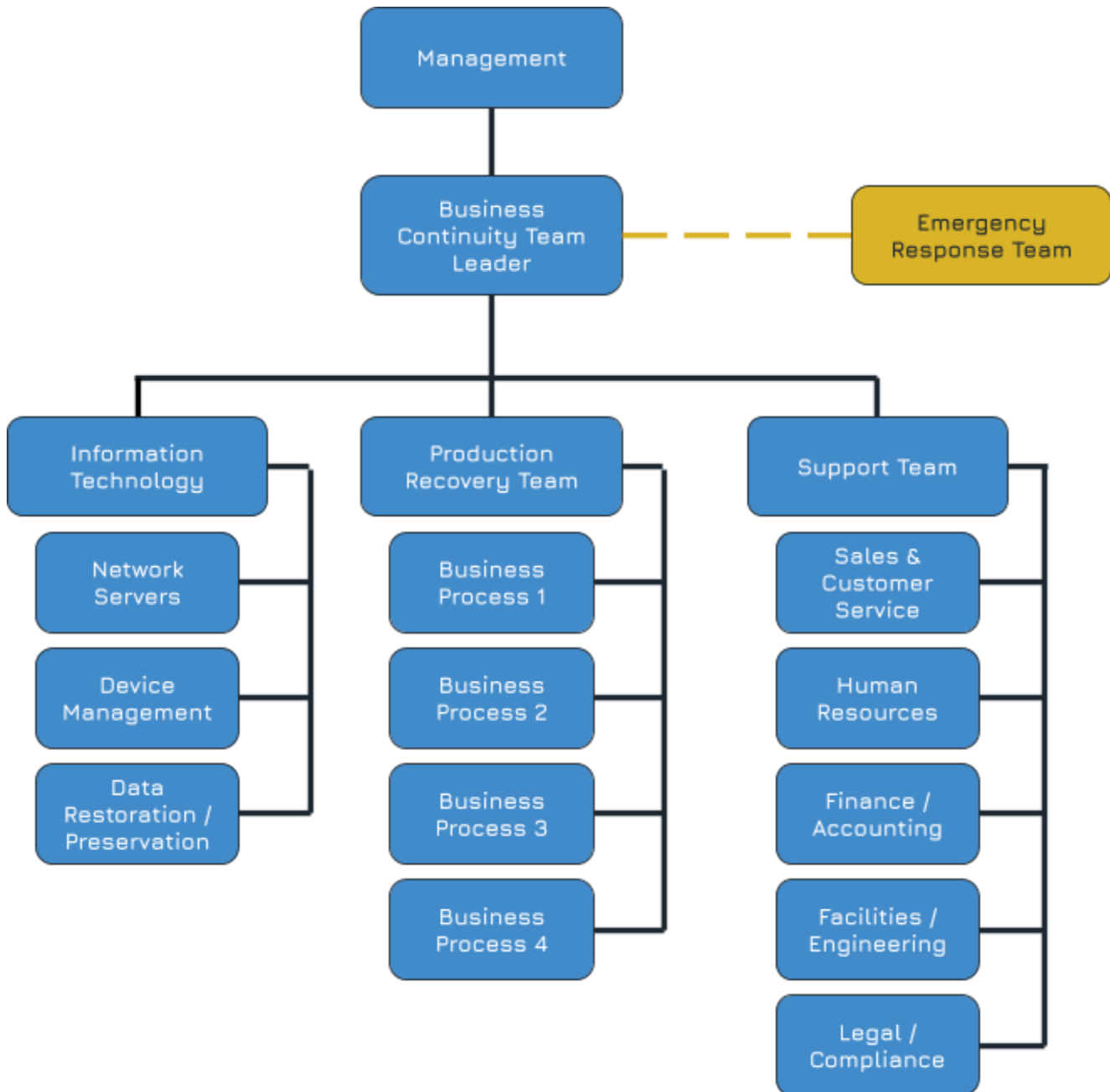
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## Team Organization

- Define the roles and responsibilities for team members
- Identify the lines of authority, succession of management, and delegation of authority
- Address interaction with external organizations including contractors and vendors.



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Sample Business Continuity Team Organization Chart



## Business Continuity Team

Team (IT, Production, Support)	Name Role	Primary Phone #	Secondary Phone #	Email Address



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## Business Impact Analysis

- Insert results of Business Impact Analysis
- Identify Recovery Time Objectives for business processes and information technology
- Identify Recovery Point Objective for data restoration



## Business Continuity Strategies & Requirements

- Insert detailed procedures, resource requirements, and logistics for execution of all recovery strategies
- Insert detailed procedures, resource requirements, and logistics for relocation to alternate worksites
- Insert detailed procedures, resource requirements, and data restoration plan for the recovery of information technology (networks and required connectivity, servers, desktop/laptops, wireless devices, applications, and data)

### Manual Workarounds

- Document all forms and resource requirements for all manual workarounds

### Incident Management

- Insert details for how incidents will be detected, managed, tracked and reported

### Define procedures:

- Incident detection and reporting
- Alerting and notifications
- Business continuity plan activation
- Emergency operations center activation
- Damage assessment (coordination with emergency response plan) and situation analysis
- Development and approval of an incident action plan



## Training, Testing & Exercising

- Training curriculum for business continuity team members
- Testing schedule, procedures, and forms for business recovery strategies and information technology recovery strategies
- Orientation, tabletop, and full-scale exercises





## Program Maintenance and Improvement

- Schedule, triggers, and assignments for the periodic review of the business continuity and IT disaster recovery plan
- Details of corrective action program to address deficiencies

Appendix



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## References to Related Policies & Procedures

- Emergency Response Plan
- Information Technology Disaster Recovery Plan (if not included in the business continuity plan)
- Crisis Communications Plan
- Employee Assistance Plan

### Vendors and Contractors

Company Name	Contact Name	Business Phone	Emergency Contact



## Revision History

Revision #	Date	Description of Changes	Authorization



## Plan Distribution & Access

The Plan will be distributed to members of the business continuity team and management. A master copy of the document should be maintained by the business continuity team leader.

Provide print copies of this plan within the room designated as the emergency operations center (EOC). Multiple copies should be stored within the EOC to ensure that team members can quickly review roles, responsibilities, tasks, and reference information when the team is activated.

An electronic copy of this plan should be stored on a secure and accessible website that would allow team member access if company servers are down.

Electronic copies should also be stored on a secure USB flash drive for printing on demand.

