

The Business Continuity Top Ten Tips

1. Make sure all staff are aware of the plan
2. Back-up data regularly and store copies off-site
3. Ensure all details from, or copies of, important documents would be accessible in an emergency
4. Keep a current list of contact details you may need
5. Be clear about what your insurance policies cover
6. Have an emergency pack available at all times
7. Make an inventory and check-list to give you an overview of what you have and what you will need
8. Make arrangements for a temporary accommodation if required
9. Test and review your plan once a year
10. Make sure all key staff keep an updated copy of the plan off-site

PRODUCED ON BEHALF OF AND SUPPORTED BY THE FOLLOWING LOCAL AUTHORITIES:



(Many thanks to all the local authorities and organisations across the UK who may or may not be aware of their contribution and help in the production of this document)

PLEASE NOTE

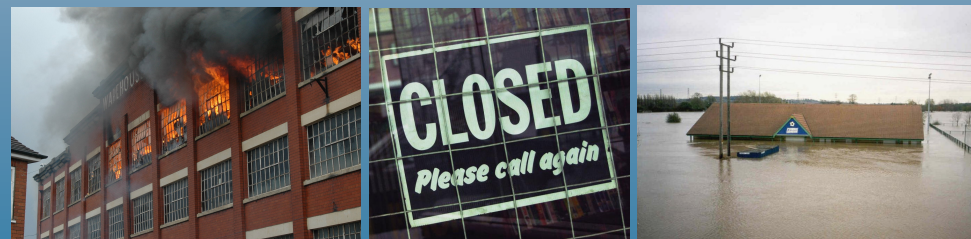
The information contained within this document is generic advice for information and guidance only and should not be seen as a substitute for professional advice or guidance specific to your industry, sector or profession. To the extent permitted by law, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum excludes any liability which arises from using this guide.



Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Local Resilience Forum

PREVENT DISASTER RUINING YOUR BUSINESS

An introduction to Business Continuity Planning



November 2006

No matter how unlikely it may seem, there is no doubt that **ALL** businesses are constantly under threat from unexpected disasters and it is for that reason that they **ALL** need robust business continuity plans.

Useful Websites:



Nottinghamshire Prepared
www.nottsprepared.gov.uk



Business Continuity Institute
www.thebci.org



Preparing for Emergencies
www.preparingforemergencies.gov.uk

Emergency Pack

You may consider it worthwhile putting an emergency pack together, which could contain such items as a copy of your business continuity plan, a spare mobile phone and charger, torch etc. Some businesses have found this pack invaluable in the early stages of an emergency.

INITIAL RECOVERY LOG

(Maintaining this log at the time of the incident will provide a record of all events, actions and decisions taken. It should include the names of those instructed, timings and actions taken)

Date/ Time	Name	Action	Comment

Business Continuity Planning

- Would you be able to recover if your organisation suffered a major disaster?

The objective of a Business Continuity Plan is to provide businesses with an effective means of recovery from a business interruption. It can minimise the impact on their operations, employees, customers, finances and ultimately protect the organisation and its reputation.

Emergencies can and do effect large and small businesses every day. From major corporations to a family run corner shop, whatever the size the effects would be the same, potentially devastating and likely to force a closure of the business.

Development of a plan requires careful preparation. It is not difficult to do and need not be expensive. The time spent is a worthwhile investment which will increase the likelihood of the business surviving and will save days or weeks of work later if the unexpected does occur.

- How do you get started?

This guide will show you how to produce your own plan using the following 5 step process and the templates at the back of the booklet:

1. **Analyse your business**
What makes it tick?
2. **Assess the risks**
What might happen?
3. **Develop a strategy**
What are you going to do?
4. **Develop your plan**
What do you need to put in place?
5. **Rehearse the plan**
Does it work?





Analyse your business

In order to develop a plan you need to have a thorough understanding of your business.

- Which parts of your business are critical to keep it going during and following an emergency?

- **Where do you start?**

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the objectives of your organisation?
- How are these objectives achieved?
- What are the products/services of your organisation?
- Who is involved in achieving your objectives (both internally and externally)?
- What are the time constraints on delivery of your product/service?



You should involve other members of your organisation at this point. It is important that you know their contribution is part of the planning process and will help ensure the plan gains acceptance.

You will also need to draw upon their expert knowledge. The people actually performing the roles are more likely to know how things run and how problems could be sorted in a quick and efficient manner in the event of an emergency.

INSURANCE DETAILS			
Company	Contact	Tel. Number	Policy Ref.

BACK-UP INFORMATION/EQUIPMENT	
Back-up Computer records/data location	
Critical paper records/information location	
Emergency Pack location (see back page of booklet for information)	

KEY EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS (What specific essential equipment would you need if you had to move to an alternative site)	
Key Business Function Area	Equipment

BUSINESS CONTACT LIST

(Details of key suppliers and customers, where it is necessary for personal contact to be made)

Customer or Supplier?	Company	Contact	Tel. Number(s)

ALTERNATIVE SUPPLIERS

Item	Company	Contact	Numbers

OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

(For example, utility companies, local councils)

Company	Contact	Tel. Number

As a starting point consider the following categories and the issues around them:

Employees	Every business has people with specialist knowledge and skills, without whom its operation would be severely disrupted.
Premises and machinery	Premises and machinery are often essential to your business and shouldn't be taken for granted.
IT and communications	Most businesses rely on computers to some extent. Some will only use them for processes such as accounting or email, others will base their whole business on them. Telecommunications systems are equally important.
Your environment	Incidents in recent years have illustrated all too clearly the effect that natural disasters can have on a business. Flooding in Carlisle and Boscastle affected hundreds of businesses, some of which never recovered.
Reputation	This is acknowledged as a very important aspect of any business. Damaged reputation could damage a business.
Customers	Customers will only remain faithful as long as they get the services and goods they require. If they don't they will soon go elsewhere - perhaps to a competitor who has survived because they have a business continuity plan!
Suppliers	Businesses need supplies and suppliers. It is always prudent to have an alternative source of materials or equipment if a regular supplier can't deliver on time.
Utilities	Very few organisations could survive for very long without the basic water and electricity.

You may have identified additional categories to consider depending on your organisation and the nature of your products/services.

- Do you have contracts, service level agreements, legal or regulatory obligations?

With these points in mind, outline the critical functions your business carries out and list these in order of importance. Your functions are what you need to do to meet your business goals and objectives.

This list will then be the basis for your Recovery Action Plan on the plan template and will help identify which functions need to be reinstated first.

KEY BUSINESS FUNCTIONS (list your critical functions in order of priority)	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

(this list is likely to be much longer, so use additional sheets as required)

RECOVERY ACTION PLAN (Continued)			
Task	Detail	Instructions/ Contact Numbers	Completed
WITHIN THE FIRST WEEK			
WITHIN 2 WEEKS			
WITHIN THE FIRST MONTH			
LONG TERM RECOVERY			

RECOVERY ACTION PLAN

(A list of tasks that are essential to the successful recovery of the business, with the reinstatement of the essential functions first. The content of this will be based on your previously produced Key Business Functions list)

Task	Detail	Instructions/ Contact Numbers	Completed
IN THE FIRST HOUR			
IN THE FIRST 24 HOURS			
IN THE FIRST 48 HOURS			



Assess the risks

Risks are the probability and impact of a variety of specific threats that could cause business interruption.

- What are the most likely and greatest risks to your business?

Remember not every event is as dramatic as an explosion or fire. The number one cause of business interruption in the UK is burst water pipes, followed closely by events such as loss of IT and communications. The same plan would very likely work just as well for any type of emergency.

If you make provision for the most serious disruptions your business will be in a position to cope with minor events easily.

- What might happen?

Common risks to business could include:

- Burst pipes, internally or externally
- Fire and flooding, including flash flooding
- Gas explosion, bomb or terrorism threat
- Denial of access to your premises
- Legal/regulatory action
- Utilities failure, internally or externally
- Staff sickness or absence
- Key supplier failure or loss of financial institution
- Burglary, vandalism or loss of facilities



Understanding the variety of risks that could have a detrimental affect on the operation of your business is vital when developing your plan.

Based on the key business functions identified in your analysis, write down the types of risks you think could affect your business and then assess the likelihood of each risk actually occurring.

Use the following list of questions to get you started:

Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If 50% of your staff were off work ill due to a flu pandemic would your business be able to survive?
Premises and machinery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What effect would damage to your buildings or the theft and destruction of your key machinery have on your business? Is all your expensive equipment in one room? How long would it take to replace specialist kit?
IT and communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would happen if your computer or telephone system failed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would your business still be able to operate? Would you be able to contact your suppliers? If your computer was stolen, could sensitive information fall into the hands of a competitor?
Your environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are your business premises in an area which could be liable to flooding?
Reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imagine a sudden media campaign against your products or services - how would you cope?
Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would you still be able to provide your service/ products if your customers couldn't contact or get access to your business?
Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do your suppliers have a Business Continuity Plan and can they continue to supply in a crisis? What if you couldn't pay them? Would they still deliver?
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long would your organisation survive without electricity or water?

STAFF CASCADE CONTACT PLAN

(This list ensures that all key members of staff are contacted and made aware of the incident. Make sure a list of all those successfully contacted and those not contacted is kept)

Name	Telephone Number(s) - Work, Mobile & Home

KEY STAFF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

(In the event of an emergency)

Name	Role	Responsibilities

OFF-SITE RECOVERY LOCATION

(Alternative work place to organise recovery)

Location	
Contact Numbers	
Contact Name	

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

[Organisation Details]

Date of last update : _____

If you have any changes to the plan please notify:

PLEASE NOTE: The contents of this plan are **CONFIDENTIAL**
(You may wish to produce an alternative version of this plan without contact details included for general circulation.)

PLAN DISTRIBUTION LIST		
(List who has a copy of the plan and where each copy is held. This will ensure that when you update the plan you know who will need a copy)		
Copy No.	Name	Location
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Assess the impact of your identified risks

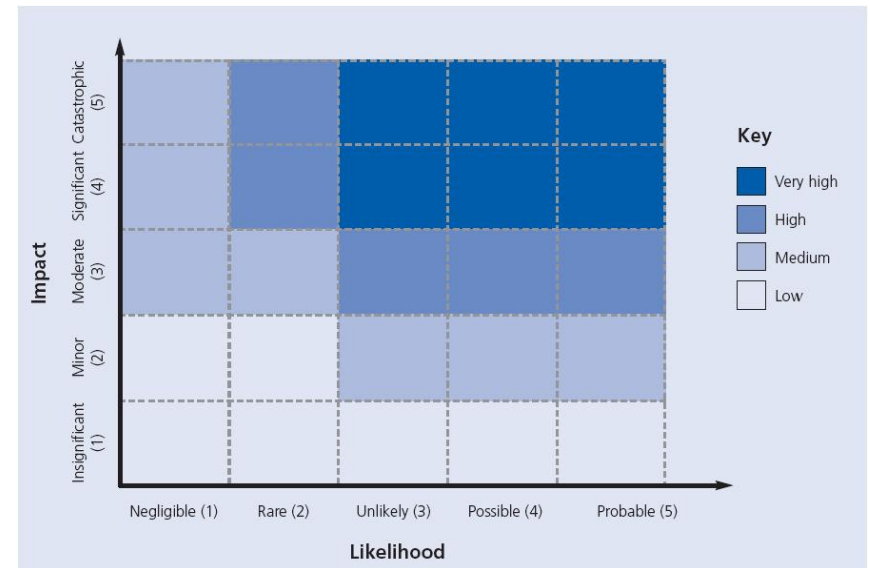
Next, carry out an assessment of the effect each identified risk would have on your key business functions if the risk occurred.

If you know **what** might affect your business and **how** it might affect it you, you can begin to plan your response procedures and take steps to mitigate the possible effects.

You should analyse the effect by asking yourself two questions:

- How likely is it to happen? [LIKELIHOOD]
- What effect will it have on the business? [IMPACT]

Then use the following grid to identify the severity of the risk.



Benefits of doing risk assessments

By identifying the higher risks to your key business functions the better prepared you will be should they occur. Where possible it is beneficial to try and mitigate or reduce the risk.

Money you spend on reducing risk you may get back in reduced insurance premiums. Speak to your insurer!



Develop a strategy

Consider the level of risk your organisation is prepared to accept.

- What is your risk appetite?

Once you have decided on the level of risk you are prepared to take, it dictates the level of action you will take to control your identified threats.

• How do you decide on a strategy?

Whatever kind of organisation you are, you will probably choose one of the following strategies:

- Accept the risks and do nothing
- Accept the risks, but make a mutual arrangement with another business or a business continuity partner to ensure that you have help after an incident
- Attempt to reduce the risks and make arrangements for help after an incident
- Reduce all risks to the point where you should not need outside help.

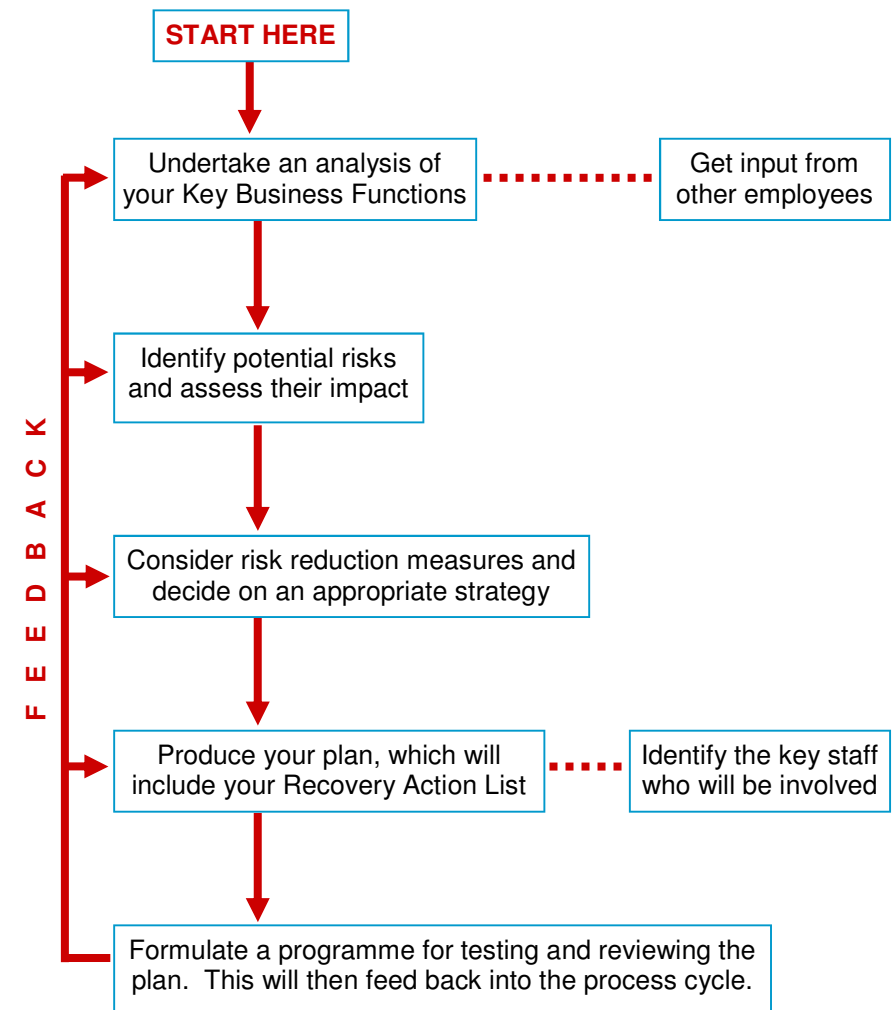


- Are you the kind of business that is committed to reducing risks, or one that prepares to take the risks and have a comeback plan?

The answer to the above question will probably be based on cost.

It is your decision - make the right one!

Summary - Process flowchart





Rehearse the plan

Once the plan has been developed, subject it to rigorous testing.

- Would it stand up to a real incident?

• How do you put your plan to the test?

Once the plan has been written and agreed, carry out a simulated incident to ensure it works. This will also expose any flaws and ensure those involved understand their roles and responsibilities.

Possible ways to rehearse:

Paper-based exercises	Test the plan using 'what if' scenarios, reading through the plan and questioning each action.
Telephone cascading	This allows you to test the communication structure in your plan, identify if there are people on your list who may have left the company, check the numbers held are up to date and measure how long it takes to pass the correct information to the correct people.
Full rehearsal	If the plan is tested in similar conditions to a real incident, this will show how the different parts of the plan fit and work together. This can be an expensive option, but the effort and cost will pay off if the plan has to be put into action for real.

Make sure any lessons learned in exercises are noted so that they can be fed back into the plan updating process.

Update the plan regularly

Carry out periodic reviews of the plan to ensure that only relevant and accurate information is contained in it. Make sure that your key staff are aware of any changes made and all copies are updated.



Develop your plan

The plan provides the framework on which to base your response.

- How soon will you be 'back in business'?

To assist you in writing your Business Continuity Plan a template/layout has been included in this guide. It can be tailored to suit individual organisations by removing or adding parts as necessary. Use it as a starting point for your own plan.

Your plan will help ensure you are better prepared for the situations that could keep your organisation from operating. It does not need to be a complex document, it need only include the most critical business processes. The important thing is to safeguard those processes that you need to keep your business functioning whilst things get back to normal.

You may like to consider meeting with other businesses to discuss a system where each can provide mutual assistance to others in the event of a crisis.



It would be a major undertaking to have a separate plan for each and every potential crisis that your business could face. A carefully written generic plan can be adapted to suit the circumstances at the time. It should also provide staff with a list of key actions to take should the unthinkable occur. This in itself will take some of the uncertainty and stress out of the situation.

- **What should you put in your plan?**

Start by considering the issues in the following categories:

Employees	<p>Make sure specialist skills are not just held by one person. Arrange training to allow others to step in when needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long would it take to recruit and/or train replacement staff? • How would you inform staff of a disruption to the business and what would you want them to do?
Premises and machinery	<p>Consider the impact damage to your buildings or the theft and destruction of your key machinery would have on your business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you operate temporarily in another location? • Have you nominated an alternate location in case your main premises are put out of action? • How long would it take to replace specialist kit? • Could you arrange on-site meetings with your insurance company to discuss issues with them?
IT and communications	<p>You need to make sure that you can access vital information even if your computer is stolen or destroyed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What alternative arrangements can be made and how long would it take? • How long would it take to restore/replace the system? • Have you got backups of your electronic data and customer details? • Where do you store your backups? • Do staff understand the backup arrangements?
Your environment	<p>Your location and surroundings could have an effect on your premises, stock or access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long would it take you to recover from a serious flood?

Reputation	<p>The way people view you affects your business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would your customers have more faith in you if they knew you had a business continuity plan?
Customers	<p>Think about what you would need to do to keep your customers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you inform your customers of a disruption to your business? • How long would they be prepared to wait for you to resume your operations? • How many could you afford to lose? • Will you incur penalty clauses for not delivering your product/service?
Suppliers	<p>Decide whether you need alternative or back-up suppliers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have alternative suppliers? • How long would it take to replace stock?
Utilities	<p>Remember that utilities may not be needed for production but may be required for staff welfare.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you need a backup generator in case of a power cut? • Can sanitation levels be maintained?

Once you have written your plan:

- Ensure all those involved are aware of their responsibilities and what is expected of them.
- Ensure those who have specific tasks have the resources to allow them to complete them.
- Make sure all those involved understand the plan and the part that others play in implementing it.
- Ensure copies of your plan are held off-site and those with specific responsibilities have a copy.