

## Business Continuity – Does Your Business Know What To Do In A Crisis?

Too many organisations look at Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery as the one in a million chance that a natural disaster will occur. As a result, when businesses perform their risk analysis, the probability of such an event is so low that it falls below the radar. This means that financial service organisations and others are not putting sufficient risk capital aside nor making appropriate contingency plans for the disasters that might actually occur.

Firstly, let's make a distinction between Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity, both very different but both useless unless co-ordinated. Disaster Recovery means the technical ability to recover one's IT systems in the event that the primary system fails. Business Continuity refers to an organisation's ability to respond to a disaster and to perform business to a pre-approved level of service. Without systems this would be difficult just as restoring IT systems without the ability to run the basic business processes would be futile too.

Recent events in the economy, commencing with the run on Northern Rock, has meant that a whole new meaning has been given to Business Continuity and yet we can still see that organisations are failing to grasp the nettle.

### Why is this?

Senior management are under constant pressure to deal with the here and now. The current climate means that operational budgets are being squeezed and the first areas to be hit are the "nice to haves". But they are only nice to have whilst there are no business operations.

At the same time, many organisations treat Business Continuity in the same way as they treat Risk Management – as a central function manned by Specialists. And this is at the crux of the problem. Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery is the responsibility of everybody. Unless businesses understand this, they will always be faced with inadequate processes and policies to cater for a crisis.

And for those organisations who think they have effective Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery plans, ask yourself the following:

- How well known are they?
  - Who have you discussed them with?
  - Does everyone in the organisation have an awareness of their responsibilities?
  - Are they built into role profiles?
- Who has the plans?
  - Who is the co-ordinator?
  - Are plans accessible in the event of a crisis?
  - Have you looked at new simple technology to store plans?
- Have you tested them?

- When was the last test and what did it cover?
- Cascade Tests
- Scenario Tests
- Desktop exercises
- Full Disaster recovery Tests
  
- Are they up to date?
  - Has the structure changed since they were last reviewed?
  - Are there new systems application or infrastructure?
  - Are there new activities since they were last written?
  
- Do they cater for different eventualities?
  - Loss of premises
  - Loss of IT systems
  - Loss of outsourced activities
  - Loss of people
  - Loss of confidence causing customer panic
  - **Or all of the above!!**

At CGAS, we have experience of making Business Continuity real from the Board Room to the Post Room.

We can deliver training programmes to all levels of your organisation; build and implement full workable Business Continuity provisions with tested plans to meet regulatory standards; risk assess the location of your premises; prepare, facilitate and run scenario tests and help you to work closely with the Regulator to ensure that not only do your plans meet the requirements of the Regulator, but they look after your people and your customers in the fairest manner.

With the help of CGAS, you can ensure that your approach to Business Continuity is pragmatic and proportionate; meets requirements, considers the well being of your staff and Treats Customers Fairly.

Please contact CGAS for a free introductory discussion or visit our website.

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