



Business Continuity Management

Initial Business Review

1. Introduction

An organisation's business continuity strategy should, at a minimum, address the following

- staff safety, welfare and internal communications
- resumption of critical business functions
- meeting contractual obligations
- management of risk
- maintenance of client confidence and the reputation of the business (via external communications)

Primarily, business continuity management is about understanding the business and establishing what is vital for its survival. An assessment of the business is critical before starting the process of development or review of continuity strategies and supporting plans. There are four basic questions to be asked:

- What is / are the business goal(s)?
- What timeframes are required to achieve the goals?
- Who is involved, both internally and externally?
- How are the goals to be achieved?

The purpose of the Initial Business Continuity Review is to help clients assess, at a high level, the organisation's ability to continue critical business functions and services to its customers (internal or external) in the event of severe disruption to normal operations, from any cause.

Reviews can be carried out in any size of organisation, and in all business sectors. The Initial Business Continuity Review will be limited to a one-day site visit and be followed by a written report. If any points are highlighted for concern in the review, this may lead to further assignments, including detailed impact and risk assessment, a continuity/recovery strategy review and/or plan development and testing. The length of time taken to complete any follow-on assignment will depend on the scope required by the client.

2. Scope

The one day assessment of the client's business continuity capabilities will involve the Chief Executive (CEO / MD) and other key players, preferably in one meeting. The review topics (see section 4 below) are covered in top level outline only. The review will enable the client to get an overall opinion on how effectively continuity of service after severe disruption can be achieved and maintained.

Although the Initial Business Continuity Review will be a standard one-day site visit to the prime business location, it will always be tailored to suit the size of the client's operation and business activities. This includes allowance for the existence of any corporate or regulatory recovery and/or continuity standards that must be complied with. If necessary, the review will comment upon the effectiveness and suitability of any such standards, in relation to the client's (local) activities.

The time planned for each review must allow for a close-out meeting with the CEO (or equivalent), possibly also with the other key personnel, at the end of the visit. This meeting is intended to provide an immediate summary of results and to highlight areas of concern, enabling the client to take any corrective action with a minimum of delay.

Each review is followed by a written report to the client, highlighting, if necessary, the areas that may need further assessment or action to be taken to establish or improve certainty of continuity of the business. This includes an executive summary and also outlines the scope of the review and the areas covered.

The scope of any follow-on work should be the subject of a separate agreement.

3. Procedure

Although individual reviews are unique in that they must be specifically geared to the client's business operation, each one follows the same general pattern.

- Agree the visit date for the review with the client (action : consultant)
- Short opening meeting with the client (usually the CEO or equivalent) at the start of the review visit to clarify the purpose and scope.
- Short physical review of the business location security, etc.)
- Review meeting(s).
- Close-out meeting to summarise the results of the review.
- Written report to management (usually within five working days).

If the client requires any follow-up action to assess progress, this can be scheduled.

Decisions on the choice of action(s) to resolve concerns or potential exposures highlighted during a review must always be taken by the client, who is best placed in terms of knowledge of the specific business requirements, strategies and budgetary constraints.

4. Review Topics

The following is a summary list of the topics covered by the review. This is not necessarily the order in which topics are reviewed; this is dependent upon whether the review is completed in one meeting, or with individuals.

- Timescales
- Financial Impact(s) of disruption on the business process
- Operational Impact (s) of disruption on the business process
- Critical business processes / functions
- Identify dependencies
- IT Access and availability of data / information
- Continuity Requirements
- Current Situation



contact

Pentire Solutions Ltd
4 Queens Crescent, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 9EU
Tel. +44 (0)1444 257088
www.pentire.co.uk

To find out how Pentire Solutions can help you address your business continuity management challenges, email us at pentireinfo@pentire.co.uk