Create continuity plans that minimize disruptions and protect critical assets

See how with ServiceNow Business Continuity Management

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Plan, exercise, and recover

Plan building with ServiceNow Business Continuity Management (BCM) has never been about simply entering data and printing it out. From our first design sessions, we wanted ServiceNow BCM to support a major cultural shift. The solution is designed for the organizational change that true resilience requires. Building it on an existing platform is the key. Organizations cannot expect to support a cultural shift where employees embed resilient practices into daily routines and then ask them to learn a new system that lives outside of the tools they use normally, just to document their continuity plans.

The Now Platform® provides organizations with the opportunity to break down silos and facilitate collaboration across the enterprise, in addition to operationalizing business continuity, disaster recovery, and crisis management. It consolidates all the data needed for planning and organizes the full catalog of enterprise data into a single system of record. This eliminates the need for planners to create data records for the purpose of plan creation—just select the necessary data. Plan creation then becomes the arrangement of existing information into the logical association of recovery data.

ServiceNow is a leader in the integrated risk management (IRM) and IT service management (ITSM) space. ServiceNow BCM offers the opportunity to help close the gap between business continuity and disaster recovery. Blending IRM and ITSM with disaster recovery and business continuity enables you to make the shift to a culture of resilience.

Business continuity adoption at any level of the organization does not just happen, you earn it. People need multiple reasons to access your business continuity / disaster recovery program on a weekly or even daily basis. This happens when your program provides value beyond the business continuity and disaster recovery boundaries.

Building plans that work

There was one unified call for the design of the planning experience. It was more than a call; it was a demand. It was a demand from an exasperated software user community that was tired of learning and re-learning tools that they use too infrequently to master and that are too heavy on functionality and light on usability.

Plan building needed to be simplified.

Accelerate adoption and time to value

We call software like ServiceNow BCM 'user-familiar.' User-familiar describes a system that goes a step beyond user-friendly. User-familiar has the feel of something that the user has already mastered. It is not just friendly or intuitive. ServiceNow BCM is like tools that users use all the time. The interaction is effortless. Users quickly adapt and become fluent within a few moments of logging into the tool.

Minimal training required

With ServiceNow BCM, training requirements are minimal. A five-minute orientation is more than enough for the typical plan builder. Many users require no training at all. The experience is similar to an online banking application or a social media site.

Reduced support requirements

The user-familiar plan interface means support requirements are reduced or eliminated. Business continuity program managers are free to focus on improving organizational resilience, rather than responding to software support requests.

Added value

A user-familiar planning experience means that the value proposition for plan builders is clear: The plan document and reporting intelligence available in ServiceNow BCM by far outweigh the minimal effort required to build and maintain a plan. Planners are more likely to utilize the system since they find the experience pleasant. This raises the probability their plans will be timely and actionable and improving the likelihood that the organizational response to and recovery from a disruption will be effective.
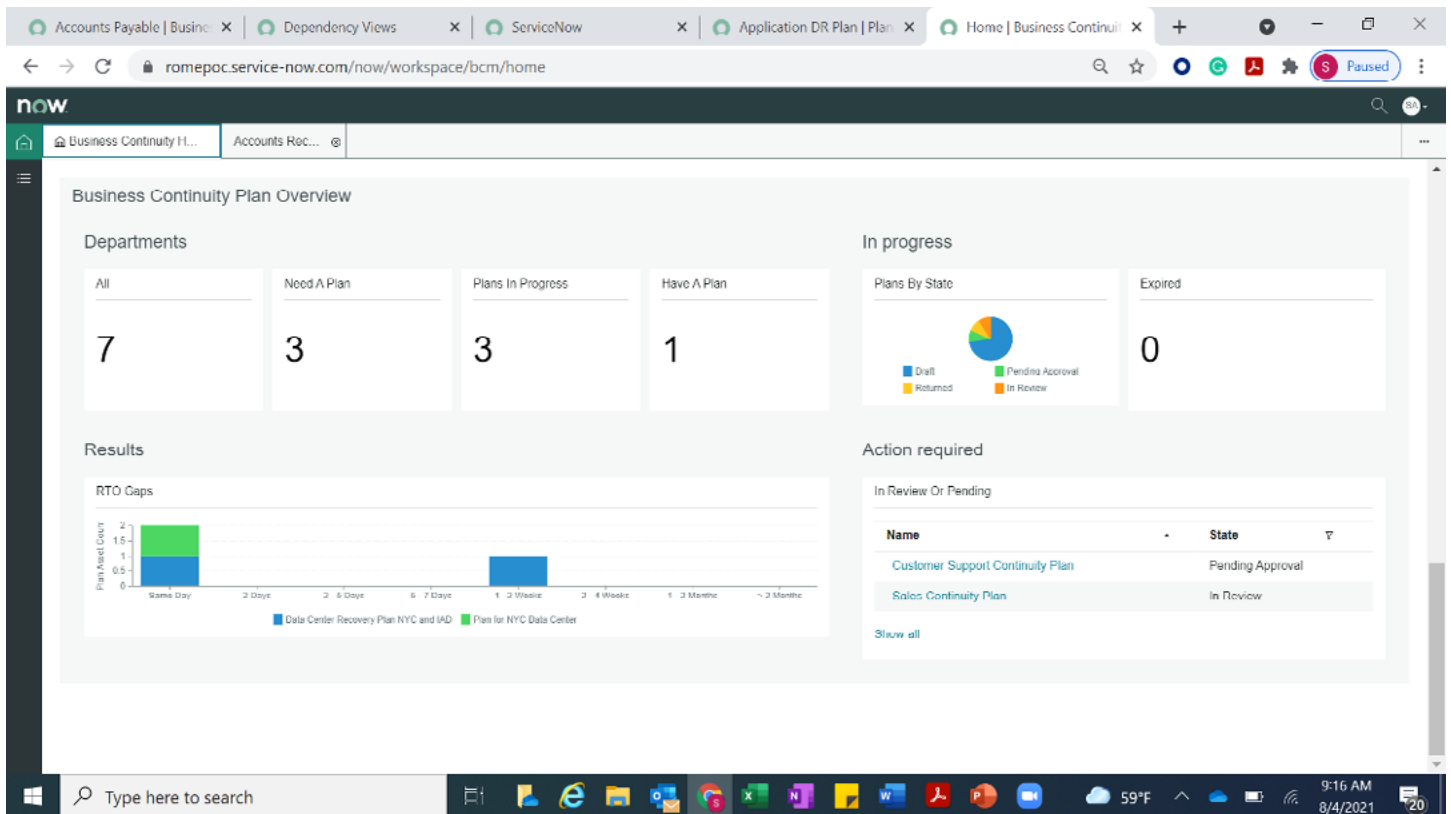
Figure 1: Administrative level dashboard tracks BIA and plan status

Key planning features

There are multiple system features that elevate ServiceNow BCM beyond other planning systems.

Crisis Command Center

ServiceNow BCM Crisis Command Center delivers the latest satellite imagery and available information like storm paths, flood zones, evacuation routes, shelter locations, and power outages.

- Visualize crisis impact to your organization to simplify coordination and improve response

- Prioritize crisis resources to where they will have the greatest impact

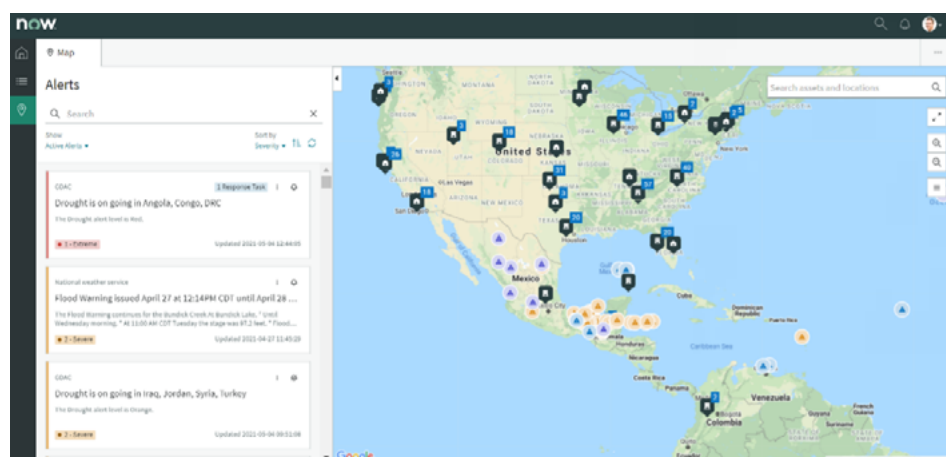- Plan for and respond to crisis with real time updates

Figure 2: View ongoing threats around the world correlated with critical assets on a geographical map

Situational awareness

Subscribe to threat alerts from feeds such as Government Data Analytics Center (GDAC) and Common National Weather Service. Correlate critical assets of the organization and visualize critical path items in line of impact due to adverse events. Activate plans and activities from geographical map.

User-specific dashboard

Each user has a custom dashboard viewable upon login that immediately presents the user with the current status of their plan-related activities. The dashboard is a gateway to open the plans available for access to the user through security.

A single-screen Interface for plan building and maintenance

Building a plan in ServiceNow BCM means working within a single user screen with tools to easily expand the sections to be completed, collapse those that are not the current focus, re-sequence sections, and rapidly navigate to the exact area of interest. Plan navigation is as simple as scrolling up or down on a webpage.

Consistent design

The links and buttons for working within the plan are easy to locate. Planners quickly identify the design standards and are empowered to add, remove, or edit the elements in their plan without support.

Gap identification

ServiceNow Business Continuity Management auto-calculates recovery gaps between primary elements. The comparison between recovery time objectives (RTO) and/or recovery time achievable (RTA) is automatically performed by the system when a an exercise is completed or a dependency is mapped. If the organization determines that the risk identified will be tolerated, the acceptance of the gap can be documented and displayed as such in the dependency map.

Record-specific attachments

Planners can upload files and attach them to any record assigned to the plan. This is in addition to the ability to upload attachments and assign them to the plan in general.

Plan approval workflow

ServiceNow BCM includes a customizable plan approval workflow. The system will track the frequency at which the plan requires review and approval, and it will send notifications to designated personnel as action is required. The settings for the approval calendar as well as the messages that are sent from the system are all editable.

Recovery & Exercise Management (REM)

ServiceNow Business Continuity Management includes a REM module that allows you to centrally manage exercises or events virtually. Selecting the plans to activate or exercise and thus the procedures required for recovery in a visual manner simplifies response and recovery, and it allows crisis teams to direct resources, adapt to changing conditions, and implement strategies more effectively. Identifying the right people to virtually assemble in order to react and respond to exercised and rehearsed tasks can be the difference between a minor and major disruption. Communication is simplified through integration with emergency mass notification providers such as Everbridge Notifications.

Time-consuming, post-event activities such as managing lessons learned and remediation, as well as After Action Reporting are streamlined as a core functionality of REM. All the event data in REM is captured for future consideration and implementation.

The ServiceNow BCM difference

Successful planning and program management depends on user familiarity and key planning elements. The operationalization of planning –bringing business continuity planning and disaster recovery into the same solution and leveraging the single source of truth –is a key distinction that must not be undervalued. Simple and powerful. User- familiarity. "Work where they work." These are the foundational concepts that enable ServiceNow BCM be distinct in a sea of sameness.

Go here to learn more ServiceNow Business Continuity Management.

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