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Introduction to Business Continuity Planning:

Business Continuity Planning (BCP) or Business Continuity and Resiliency Planning (BCRP) creates a guideline for continuing business operations under adverse conditions such as a natural calamity, an interruption in regular business processes, loss or damage to critical infrastructure, or a crime done against the business.

It is defined as a plan that "identifies an organization's exposure to internal and external threats and synthesizes hard and soft assets to provide effective prevention and recovery for the organization, while maintaining competitive advantage and value system integrity."

Understandably, risk management and disaster management are major components in business continuity planning.

Objectives of BCP: Following are the objectives of BCP –

- ✓ Reducing the possibility of any interruption in regular business processes using proper risk management.
- ✓ Minimizing the impact of interruption, if any.
- ✓ Teaching the staff their roles and responsibilities in such a situation to safeguard their own security and other interests.
- ✓ Handling any potential failure in supply chain system, to maintain the natural flow of business.
- ✓ Protecting the business from failure and negative publicity.
- ✓ Protecting customers and maintaining customer relationships.
- ✓ Protecting the prevalent and prospective market and competitive advantage of the business.
- ✓ Protecting profits, revenue and goodwill.
- ✓ Setting a recovery plan following a disruption to normal operating conditions.
- ✓ Fulfilling legislative and regulatory requirements.

Traditionally a business continuity plan would just protect the data center. With the advent of technologies, the scope of a BCP includes all distributed operations, personnel, networks, power and eventually all aspects of the IT environment.

Need of BCP:

The need of a business continuity plan has been growing frequently. It is driven by the stakeholder demand and the regulatory compliances. Business continuity requirements will make various organizations review their plans and then test those results they consider crucial in the operational process. Their main

objective is to reduce the disturbance in the business processes, maintain the confidence and trust on the employees of the organization. Some Benefits of Implementing Business Continuity Plan are –

- **User Friendly** – It is user friendly because team members can easily implement it in their business.
- **Quick Implementation** – The implementation of business continuity plan is frequent. If you have highly skilled expertise, then it becomes a fast process.
- **Built-in reporting** – When we implement business continuity plans, we maintain a report on which situations that led us to implement them and this in-built reporting feature with steps highlighted help other teams.

The primary objective of a business continuity plan is to minimize loss by minimizing the cost associated with disruptions and enable an organisation to survive a disaster and to reestablish normal business operations. In order to survive, the organisation must assure that critical operations can resume normal processing within a reasonable time frame. The key points are summarized as follows.

- 1) Provide for the safety and well-being of people on the premises at the time of disaster. The unexpected nature of disaster is makes them so devastating. Being prepared may not prevent the disaster, but it does mitigate the impact on your business.
- 2) Continue critical business operations.
- 3) Minimise the duration of a serious disruption to operations and resources (both information processing and other resources).
- 4) Minimise immediate damage and losses.
- 5) Establish management succession and emergency powers.
- 6) **Backup is not sufficient:** By deploying business continuity and disaster recovery solutions leveraging cloud technologies and virtual servers, organizations can run critical business applications from backup instances on virtual servers in the cloud. This approach enables you to effectively “flip a switch” and can keep your downtime to a minimum.
- 7) **Insurance:** Insurance isn’t enough to cover all the damages of a disaster. Yes, it can cover the costs of repairs, but in terms of loss of revenue and business prospects due to downtime, it has little effect.
- 8) **Competitive edge:** You have a big advantage over your competitors if you can restore normal operations while they are still trying to figure it out.
- 9) **Business must go on:** Business continuity makes this possible by establishing actions that must be taken to ensure operations remain active, no matter the nature of the disaster.

When building your business continuity plan, you consider all the possible disruptions you might encounter. Loss of power or an office location is one of the biggest reasons offsite and redundant backup remains one of the most important aspects of IT reliability.

Your business simply cannot afford downtime. A solid business continuity plan can mean the difference between being back up and running in a matter of minutes versus days or even weeks.

Difference between BCP and DRP:

| Points | Business continuity Planning (BCP) | Disaster Recovery Planning (DRP) |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Stands for | Business Continuity Planning | Disaster Recovery Planning. |
| Definition | It is a plan to help ensure that business processes can continue during a time of emergency or disaster. | DRP is a documented, structured approach with instructions for responding to unplanned incidents. |
| Process sequence | Business Impact Analysis (BIA) leads into BCP | BCP leads into DRP. |
| Activity involved | BCP defines WHAT type of disasters may occur along with continuation in that disaster. | DRP defines HOW to recover from the disasters defined in BCP. |
| Activity explains | BCP refers to the means by which loss of business may be avoided and it ought to define the business requirements for continuity of operations. | DRP deals with the restoration of business systems with alternative and connects to full functionality under the crisis. |
| | Business continuity differs in that it is the process of getting the entire business back to full functionality after a crisis. | Disaster recovery is the process of getting all important IT infrastructure and operations up and running following an outage. |
| Developmental Steps / strategies | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Establish an Emergency Preparedness team 2) Identify essential services/functions 3) Identify required skill sets and staff reallocation 4) Review with the emergency preparedness team 5) Revise, test and update the plan | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) prevention, including proper backups, having surge protectors and generators 2) detection, a byproduct of routine inspections, which may discover new (potential) threats 3) correction |
| Benefits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Reducing the possibility of any interruption in regular business processes using proper risk management. o Minimizing the impact of interruption, if any. o Protecting profits, revenue and goodwill. o Setting a recovery plan following a disruption to normal operating conditions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Minimizing risk of delays o Guaranteeing the reliability of standby systems o Providing a standard for testing the plan o Minimizing decision-making during a disaster o Reducing potential legal liabilities o Lowering unnecessarily stressful work environment. |
| | Business continuity is a proactive plan to avoid and mitigate risks associated with a disruption of operations. | Business continuity is a proactive plan to avoid and mitigate risks associated with a disruption of operations. |

Costs associated with BCP:

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