BCP & Contingency Plan

Jake O'Connor

MS511

Module 2 – Laws and Acts

Introduction

Business continuity management, which includes the creation of business continuity plans, disaster recovery plans, and many other types of risk identification and mitigation strategies, is an integral field of modern business. Businesses that lack concrete plans to respond to emergencies are far less likely to recover from those emergencies, and far more likely to face legal and financial trouble as a result. No two business continuity plans are the same, but all share a common set of goals which guide the process of the plan's creation, maintenance, and execution.

Elements of Business Continuity Management

"Business continuity management is defined as the advanced planning and preparation of an organization to maintaining business functions or quickly resuming after a disaster has occurred," (Dobran, 2019). This includes key elements such as the creation of, and equally importantly the maintenance of, a business continuity plan. It also includes the assembly of a continuity team which is responsible for the creation and execution of the business continuity plan. Business continuity management is an umbrella that covers continuity planning, emergency response, disaster recovery, and many other individual tasks which ensure that businesses are prepared for the worst.

Business Continuity Plans

"The Business Continuity Plan is a written document that outlines every aspect of the company's disaster preparedness, response and recovery," (Rock, 2017). Business continuity plans (BCP) are the go-to document outlining exactly what the company is prepared for and how they plan to respond to it. This includes a thorough accounting of all conceivable threats that the company faces, how likely those threats are to occur, and how the business plans to avoid and/or respond to those threats becoming disasters. A business continuity plan can be as thorough or as general as the company sees fit, but there

is a tradeoff between thoroughness being costly in the development and vagueness being costly in the event of an unhandled disaster. Even the process of developing a business continuity plan is beneficial to a company, as it requires the company to analyze its weaknesses both inside and out in order to prepare for the unexpected.

Emergency Response Plans

"The [Emergency Response Plan] is a plan designed to provide guidelines... to be followed in cases of accidents and emergencies," (de Redação, 2021). Emergency response plans (ERP) are necessary, and oftentimes legally required, plans which detail how the company and its employees are expected to respond to different types of emergency situations. The emergencies covered depend on the type of business, but generally include earthquakes, fires, severe storms, and any other emergency. The primary goal of an emergency response plan is to guard the health and safety of employees, visitors, and anyone else involved in a potential emergency.

Crisis Communication Plans

"Crisis communication refers to the dissemination of information by an organization to address a crisis that impacts customers and/or the organization's reputation," (Amaresan). Crisis communication plans are guidelines for how, when, and what an organization will communicate with its customers, contractors, regulators, and other stakeholders in the event of a crisis. Communication is key during any kind of crisis, whether it's quickly informing emergency services of an active emergency or detailing what happened to industry regulators and employee unions. Having a crisis communication plan in place with an appropriate response to any potential crisis will reduce a company's loss of business, loss of reputation, and likelihood of legal action in the aftermath of a crisis.

Goals of a Business Continuity Plan

The primary goal of any business continuity plan is to ensure that a business can respond to as many types of incidents as possible in order to minimize their impact so that the business can spend less time and resources returning to a functioning state (Muthoni, 2021). Secondary goals which contribute to the overall goal of the business continuity plan include identifying a team, analyzing threats and risks, and finding preventative measures that could altogether avoid a disaster. The foundation of a business continuity team is integral in order to know who is in charge of which elements both during the creation of the BCP and during its future execution, as well as who is responsible for the maintenance of the document itself over time. A thorough examination of the business's risks and their impact upon the business's continued operation is another key goal of the business continuity plan process. Another important goal of the business continuity plan is to outline measures that are capable of lessening or outright preventing the impact of certain disasters on the business, such as moving in-house servers to a cloud solution in order to prevent or lessen the likelihood of catastrophic data loss.

Contingency Plans

"A contingency plan is a backup plan, activated in the event of a disaster that disrupts a company's production and puts employees in danger," (Phillips, 2018). Contingency planning is preparing for every outcome of a risk in order to minimize losses of life, time, and resources. The business continuity and disaster recovery planning processes require the creation of multiple contingency plans for any risk with a significant likelihood. Good contingency plans are those which have clear triggers and a thorough course of actions to take in order to mitigate the effects of a disaster. While the creation of a thorough contingency plan may be a significant undertaking for a business, the more contingency plans in place the more obvious response patterns will emerge and the easier the process will become.

Conclusion

Business continuity planning is an important aspect of creating and maintaining a business of any size, and is often a legal obligation depending on the field that the business operates within. Having a thorough and maintained business continuity plan, crisis communication plan, and emergency response plan can help to ensure that not only will a business recover from a disaster but they will also minimize loss of revenue, reputation, and most importantly life.

References

7 key elements of business continuity - citrix. Citrix.com. (2020, April 3). Retrieved November 7, 2021,

from https://www.citrix.com/fieldwork/flexible-work/7-key-elements-of-business-

continuity.html.

Amaresan, S. (n.d.). 6 crisis communication plan examples & how to write your own [template]. HubSpot

Blog. Retrieved November 7, 2021, from https://blog.hubspot.com/service/crisis-

communication-plan.

Business continuity plan. Business Continuity Plan | Ready.gov. (2021, May 26). Retrieved November 7,

2021, from https://www.ready.gov/business-continuity-plan.

Crisis communications plan. Crisis Communications Plan | Ready.gov. (2021, February 17). Retrieved

November 7, 2021, from https://www.ready.gov/crisis-communications-plan.

de Redação, E. (2021, April 14). Emergency response plan (ERP): What it is and how to prepare one.

Ambipar Group. Retrieved November 7, 2021, from

https://ambipar.com/en/noticias/emergency-response-plan-erp-what-it-is-and-how-to-prepare-

one/.

Dobran, B. (2019, March 25). 7 reasons why your organization needs business continuity management.

    phoenixNAP Blog. Retrieved November 7, 2021, from https://phoenixnap.com/blog/what-is-

    business-continuity-management.

Emergency response plan. Emergency Response Plan | Ready.gov. (2021, May 25). Retrieved November

    7, 2021, from https://www.ready.gov/business/implementation/emergency.

Muthoni, J. (2021, April 20). Primary goal of business continuity plan, objectives & more. Jonas Muthoni.

    Retrieved November 7, 2021, from https://jonasmuthoni.com/blog/primary-goal-business-

    continuity-plan/.

Phillips, C. (2018, August 1). The benefits of contingency planning. Small Business - Chron.com. Retrieved

    November 7, 2021, from https://smallbusiness.chron.com/benefits-contingency-planning-

    18558.html.

Rock, T. (2017, May 9). 9 crucial parts of BCM Business Continuity Management. Invenio IT. Retrieved

    November 7, 2021, from https://invenioit.com/continuity/bcm-business-continuity-

    management/.

What is a contingency plan (and how can you make one?): Upwork. Upwork. (2021, April 29). Retrieved

    November 7, 2021, from https://www.upwork.com/resources/what-is-contingency-plan.