Lab: Develop a Resilience Exercise Plan for a Critical Process

Overview

In this lab, you will design a resilience exercise for one critical business process at CloudNova. The goal is to practice how to plan and structure a resilience test — not to run it — and to learn what must be in place before an exercise is executed.

You will choose whether the exercise should be a **tabletop** (discussion-based) or **functional** (hands-on) based on the company's readiness and level of risk comfort.

Your Mission

CloudNova provides a 24/7 customer analytics platform used by 800+ clients. If the platform is down for more than four hours, they must pay SLA penalties.

You are hired to design a resilience exercise for one critical process. The exercise must help leadership understand whether the process can recover in time and whether roles and decisions are clear during disruption.

Your Objectives

By the end of this lab, you will:

- Select a critical process to test.
- Choose the right type of exercise (tabletop or functional).
- Define scope, roles, timing, and success criteria.
- Build a realistic scenario and injects.
- Show how the exercise will produce lessons and improvements.

How to Work Together

Form groups of 4–5 and assign roles:

- **Exercise Lead** – owns purpose and scope.
- **Scenario Designer** – builds scenario and injects.
- **Metrics/Evidence Owner** – defines what “success” means.
- **Governance Liaison** – ensures alignment and approvals.
- **Recorder** – documents the plan.

Steps to Complete the Lab

Step 1: Pick the Critical Process

Choose one core process such as:

- Customer onboarding
- Real-time analytics
- Reporting/exporting
- Incident notification

Write a one-sentence purpose for the exercise.

Step 2: Choose the Exercise Type

- **Tabletop**: safer, discussion-based, used to validate decisions and coordination.
- **Functional**: hands-on testing, used when the team is confident plans are mature.

Step 3: Define the Scope

List:

- What is included

- What is excluded
- Key dependencies (e.g., cloud services, identity, storage)

Step 4: Set Objectives and Success Criteria

Write 3–5 measurable objectives.
Examples:

- “Restore service within the 4-hour RTO.”
- “Customer notifications are sent through the correct channel.”

Step 5: Build the Scenario + Injects

Create the storyline of the disruption.
Add 6–10 timed “injects” (new pieces of information) that force decisions.

Examples of injects:

- A cloud outage update
- A VIP client escalating
- Conflicting data from monitoring tools

Step 6: Define Roles and Communication

Answer:

- Who makes the decision to declare the incident?
- Who communicates with customers?
- Who approves recovery steps?

Step 7: Evidence and Metrics

Decide how you will measure the team’s performance.
Examples:

- Time to restore service
- Clarity of communication
- Accuracy of escalation

Step 8: Safety and Controls

Document any limits to protect live systems, especially if functional:

- Use lower environments
- Avoid real data loss
- Have rollback plans

Step 9: Create a Run Sheet

Outline a short timeline for the session:

- Opening briefing
- Scenario start
- Injects at set time intervals
- Wrap-up and immediate observations

Step 10: Debrief Plan

Create a short debrief template with:

- What worked
- What failed or stalled
- Improvements to make next time

What You Will Deliver

Your team will submit one Exercise Plan that includes:

- Process selected
- Exercise type (tabletop or functional)
- Purpose and objectives
- Scope and dependencies
- Scenario with injects
- Roles and responsibilities
- Evidence and metrics
- Debrief plan

Tips for Success

- Keep it simple and realistic.
- Don’t over-design; clarity is more valuable than complexity.
- Focus on *coordination and decision-making*, not technical steps.
- The goal is confidence and visibility, not perfection.