



## **Genesis GRC: 10 Steps to Developing a Business Continuity Plan**

*September 2020*

1. Establish ownership of the Business Continuity Plan
2. Assemble an experienced team representing all relevant business skills
3. Establish the scope of the plan - business areas, and functions, processes
4. Risk Evaluation
5. Business Impact Analysis
6. Develop a recovery strategy and a recovery plan
7. Document the plan
8. Executive approval and sign-off
9. Test the plan
10. Maintain, update and periodically re-test

## **1. Ten Steps to Developing a Business Continuity Plan (BCP)**

### **1.1 Scope**

To remain successful, all types and sizes of company need to be resilient to disruption. This document describes a general process to plan, implement and manage a comprehensive BC Plan. There is no one-size-fits-all that will apply to every company. Rather, each company needs to consider its own unique way of doing business, its own risk appetite, the industry and trading environment it is in - and build a plan that is unique to it. The overall aim of this process is to enable a company to do this. The key goal of the process is that the business continues when a disruption (major or minor) happens. Simply hoping a major disruption won't happen isn't a stance that leads to a resilient enterprise, nor job retention. It is imperative that the Plan is flexible enough to be able to handle any kind of disruption.

This document is significantly influenced by ISO-31000:2018, Risk Management and ISO-22301:2019, Business Continuity.

This document does not describe the BCP. It describes a broad overview of a process to build the BCP.

### **1.2 Summary of the Process**

1. Assign ownership of the BC plan to a senior person, and ensure the responsibility of managing the plan is clearly defined. This allocation of overall ownership and allocation of the responsibility of managing the BCP is a critical step.
2. Assemble an experienced team with relevant business skills, from all departments involved in the successful running of the business. All required roles and responsibilities should be clearly assigned, authorised and accepted.
3. Establish the scope of the plan, the business areas, functions, and especially the interdependencies. This needs to take into account factors including:
  - the organisation's overall objectives, its products and services
  - interested parties and the requirements of those interested parties
  - all relevant business areas, products and services
  - all relevant business functions – especially, identify all critical functions, and all interdependencies

4. Perform a Risk Evaluation. This is about identifying departments, processes, and functions that are critical to the business. Then determining how quickly they become critical, and how quickly and how significantly their absence will impact the business.
5. Perform a Business Impact Analysis. There are various ways of doing this. In essence, it is aimed at determining levels of risk and impact for all parts of the business, all functions and processes. This in turn enables efficient allocation of resources for recovery - the order of recovery, how much resource it will take to recover which business component, in what order, involving whom.

The business as a whole, and potentially some departments should perform a Risk Assessment and a Business Impact Analysis. This should be done regularly, at least annually or after some significant change.

6. Develop a recovery strategy and a recovery plan, with acceptable down times for critical functions, and addressing as many disaster scenarios as possible. This will include many things including:
  - what the recovery time scales are, the time window in which any systems need to be back on-line, what data could / will be missing when those systems do come back on-line...
  - what scenarios will trigger the BCP, who has the authority to trigger it, what happens if they are absent...
  - what needs to be communicated, who will do it, what they will do, who they will contact and when, what contact details, where are those contact details...
  - the location where operations will re-commence (eg in the case of primary site loss), what staff will be required, where they will sit, what comms will be available, what system configurations will need to change to reflect location change...
  - What business specific functions are to be restored first, how, by who, involving what, using what procedures...
  - How day-to-day operations will proceed, like staff being paid, finance authorisations, business decision making, office expense authorisation, stationary, stock deliveries...

7. Document the Plan. No matter how brilliant your BCP, if no-one knows about it, or if no-one can find it - it is useless. So too, if it was a brilliant solution that was valid before the big system change that happened a year ago that rendered it obsolete. It is imperative that it is up-to-date, accessible, available, proven and that all involved know how to use it and what their part is.
  
8. Executive approval, sign-off and implementation. Accountability is important, and executive oversight. If the entire company is going to handle the disruption, the entire company needs to play their part. With everyone busy, it is easy for Business Continuity to get overlooked and slide. It really needs to be an executive level responsibility to see it fully managed, implemented and tested.
  
9. Test the plan. In many ways, your Business Continuity will only be as effective as your Risk Assessment. In many ways also, it will only be as effective as your testing. It is in testing that you prove that it is effective, that you wrinkle out issues.  
    "We're fine, Pete knows how to do that."  
    "What happens if Pete is on leave and is not around - what then?"  
    "Oh yeah..."
  
10. Maintain, update and periodically re-test. Going to the gym once is not fit for life. Businesses are continually changing, growing and adapting. Business Continuity needs to do the same. Plans should be reviewed and updated regularly, and tested regularly – at least annually or after some significant change. Notoriously difficult to keep up-to-date are contact details and staff roles. You need procedures in place to handle this.

**These are the basic steps required to build yourself a Business Continuity Plan that will be effective when that major disruption lands on your head. Do you have one in place? Is it up-to-date and tested? Does it cover all of the business? If not, then there is work to be done. Let's do it. It is your business that is on the line.**

*For more details, visit the website  
or contact me*

**[www.GenesisGRC.co.uk](http://www.GenesisGRC.co.uk)  
[Dale.Spence@GenesisGRC.co.uk](mailto:Dale.Spence@GenesisGRC.co.uk)  
0777 560 4378**