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Business Preparedness & Continuity Consulting Services

Business Continuity Awareness Week, March 17-21, 2014

Day 5: What You Can Do to Protect Your Business

During Business Continuity Awareness Week I've highlighted some reasons why you should implement a business continuity program in your company including the costs if you do nothing and the benefits if you do something. I also listed the primary regulations and standards applicable to a continuity program. In this last article I'd like to briefly outline the high-level steps of the process to build a continuity program in your company and give you my perspective.

There are different ways to approach building a continuity program. Any web search for business continuity will return many models and approaches. Your company culture, size, requirements, and resources should drive you towards the most appropriate model and tools (if necessary). Despite their differences, all the models will include a few fundamental steps:

1. Assess your processes and your risks
2. Develop your plans and procedures
3. Train your staff and employees on their responsibilities
4. Test and exercise those processes and plans

Many of the models will be similar to the Shewhart cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) and highlight the application of continual process improvement.

My Perspective: Whatever model you choose, it must be flexible enough to meet your requirements and fit into your company culture. This includes any tools that go with the model. If you are a large, diverse corporation, you may consider a software based solution to help manage your continuity program. For a medium or small company, investment in these tools would likely push continuity out of your budget and far from ever happening. So whatever model you choose, it has to fit. I am a big fan of using templates, but the templates have to be flexible to fit your needs and not force you into a cookie cutter approach where everyone is the same. The need for that flexible structure is why I developed the Accinctus ADAPTABLE[®] model. My intent is that the process and design fits your requirements (flexible) while still utilizing best practices, lessons learned, and common business continuity professional processes (structure).

The other point I want to highlight is that doing something, even something small, is better than doing nothing and each step will make your company stronger. Start with an Emergency Action Plan or an emergency communication checklist. Just one proactive step will increase your resiliency compared to not having it – and then build upon that one accomplishment over time. The word resilient is the key, meaning the ability to withstand the challenges that come up. I chose a Roman road for the logo of Accinctus for a reason. To me a perfect symbol of resiliency is a 2000 year old Roman road that is still in use and you can drive modern cars and trucks on. Your company has goals and a defined direction to your future success. You just need a resilient road to get there, and that's what implementing a business continuity program can give you.



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In these 5 brief articles, I have outlined what a business continuity program is, the guidelines and process, the benefits of implementing a program and the potential costs of doing nothing. Natural disasters are a normal part of our dynamic world and we can't avoid them. The risk of man-made threats is also on the rise. Risks may be local in nature or they may be similar across the country. In Colorado we are less concerned about a hurricane but should be prepared for blizzards, wildfires, and severe thunderstorms. While businesses in Florida are not worried about a blizzard, they need to be prepared for a hurricane as a primary threat. Crime, terrorism, supply chain disruptions, civil disturbances, utility outages and workplace violence are man-made threats we all need to prepare for.

Your company is at risk. You are responsible to prepare for those risks as best you can. The cost of inaction in this area is too great and could put your company out of business. Implementing a business continuity program that fits your company culture and requirements will make your company stronger and more resilient.

Contact me to learn how the Accinctus ADAPTABLE[®] business continuity model can make your company more resilient.

As always – Be Aware, Be Prepared, Be Safe. – *Brian*