



Homeland
Security

Business Continuity Planning Suite

With the broad range of threats that businesses face today, an easy-to-use business continuity planning solution is more important than ever. Companies ranging from small businesses to large enterprises emphasize the value in ensuring that in the event of a disruptive incident, operations and vital functions can continue without a severe drop in services. The Business Continuity Planning (BCP) Suite is designed to meet this need by enabling businesses to create, improve, or update their business continuity plans.

Background

The Suite originated as a request for an easy-to-use business continuity planning solution from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Critical Manufacturing Sector Coordinating Council (SCC). Initially, the Suite was targeted at small- to medium-sized businesses. However, large companies have also found value in the Suite by using it to unify multiple plans across their organization, better enabling them to review and test their business continuity programs. As Critical Manufacturing SCC member Aerojet said, "Continuity planning means being prepared. Whether it's a critical security incident or a natural disaster, having a business continuity plan in place ensures that you're prepared to react and recover from a business disruption."

Suite Components

The Suite is designed to be user friendly and scalable for optimal organizational use. It consists of three main components, which include: a BCP training, automated BCP and disaster recovery plan (DRP) generators, and a self-directed exercise for testing an implemented BCP. Businesses can utilize this solution to maintain normal operations and exhibit resilience during a disruptive event.

I. Business Continuity Training: A 30-minute video-based course that examines the importance of business continuity plans and prepares users to write their own plans. It is broken into three main segments:

1. What is business continuity planning?
2. Why is business continuity planning important?
3. What is the planning process?

The training contains an introductory video and interviews with an SCC member who has successfully implemented a BCP. Upon completion of the training, users should possess a basic understanding of business continuity, the process of completing a BCP, and the motivation to complete their own plan using the Suite's generator.

II. Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan Generators: The Suite's BCP and DRP Generators were developed to guide businesses through writing their own plans and were created with functionality similar to automated tax preparation tools. The BCP Generator builds a plan that guides a company through any disruption to a return to normal operations, while the DRP Generator develops a plan specific to a recovery of information

technology systems. Both Generators have a “Save and Exit” feature that allows plans to be completed in increments if needed. A “Print” option allows hard copies to be produced and disseminated to appropriate parties.

III. Business Continuity Plan Table Top Exercise: The final component of the Suite is a self-directed exercise that tests an implemented BCP and allows users to gauge the effectiveness of their BCP and DRPs. This Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program compliant table top exercise focuses on a business’ recovery efforts following selected disruptions intended to represent a broad spectrum of threats, including a hurricane, earthquake, ice storm, or power blackout. The goal of the exercise is to improve a business’ overall recovery capabilities and collective decision making process. It is designed to be a thought-provoking exchange of ideas to help develop and expand existing knowledge of policies and procedures within the framework of an organization’s BCP implementation.

Project Partners

The development, testing, and outreach efforts for the Suite included a number of Federal agencies and departments and private sector partners. Among them were the Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology, FEMA’s Private Sector Office of External Affairs and Ready office, Iowa State University, the Center for Industrial Research and Service, Boeing, General Electric, Johnson Controls, General Motors, Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, Caterpillar, U.S. Steel, Smith & Wesson, Alexion Pharmaceuticals, and Zero International.

Contact Information

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