

BS 25999 Business Continuity

presented by

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Many organizations consider themselves prepared for disruption to business continuity, believing that the existence of a plan made a few years ago will protect them from any disaster. Experience shows this is far from the truth. Business Continuity Management (BCM) must be a living, holistic management process that identifies potential impacts that threaten an organisation and provides a framework for building resilience and the capability for an effective response which safeguards the interests of its key stake holders, reputation, brand and value creating activities.

Registration to a standard is not necessarily the most effective way forwards; it may be better to implement a management system which follows the Guidelines of the Business Continuity Institute.

① BS 25999

BS 25999 is the world's first Business Continuity Management (BCM) standard and developed to provide good practice in this aspect of today's organisations. The International version ISO 22301 is based on the British Standard, and due to be published later this year. There are two documents:

BS 25999-1 Code of Practice

... taking the form of guidance and recommendations. It establishes the process, principles and terminology of business continuity management (BCM), providing a basis for understanding, developing and implementing business continuity within an organization and to provide confidence in business-to-business and business-to-customer dealings.

In addition, it provides a comprehensive set of controls based on BCM best practice and covers the whole BCM lifecycle.

BS 25999-2 Specification

... specifies the requirements for establishing, implementing, operating, monitoring, reviewing, exercising, maintaining and improving a documented Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) within the context of managing an organization's overall business risks.

The requirements specified in BS 25999-2 are generic and intended to be applicable to all organizations regardless of type, size and nature of business. The extent of application of these requirements depends on the organization's operating environment and complexity.

BS 25999 was developed by a group of world class experts representing a cross-section of industry sectors and the government to establish the process, principles and terminology of Business Continuity Management. It is suitable for any organization, large or small, from any sector. It is particularly relevant for organizations which operate in high risk environments such as finance, telecommunications, transport and the public sector, where the ability to continue operating is paramount for the organization itself and its customers and stakeholders.

The standard is designed to keep your business going during the most challenging and unexpected circumstances. By helping to put the fundamentals of a BCM system in place, it protects your staff, preserves your reputation and provides the ability for you to continue to operate and trade. BS 25999 provides a basis for understanding, developing and implementing business continuity within your organization and gives you confidence in business-to-business and business-to-customer dealings. It also contains a comprehensive set of controls based on BCM best practice and covers the whole BCM lifecycle.

② Why bother

Is it worth seeking certification?

There are strong arguments that certification is not worthwhile. It is said to be hard work to achieve certification and even harder to maintain.

There are 230 companies certified to BS25999 in the UK and 450 worldwide. The standard is thorough and demanding, but there are alternatives, such as basing a process on the bci good practice guidelines 2010

What is the motivation for a Business Continuity Management System (BCMS)?

... very few companies in the UK (16%) have a strategy/process for business continuity.

- * One of the toughest questions a senior manager has to answer after a disaster is *Why did you not have a plan?*
- * Disasters do happen, normally caused by events considered simple everyday occurrences; a cable being cut, a flood, .. Not normally being caused by events considered rare.
- * 80% of businesses affected by a major incident close after 18 months.
- * 90% of businesses hit by a major data loss close within 2 years.
- * Share prices recover more quickly in those companies who have a BC plan.
- * Customers expect their suppliers to have a BCMS (even certification sometimes)
- * The requirement for a BCMS is included in some service contracts.
- * National law: Sarbanes Oxley, FSA-Companies Act, Civil Contingencies Act, Corporate Governance.
- * It introduces a common language into a business environment, where lack of consistency can be dangerous

③ A Business Continuity Management Process

Experience shows

- * It must be led from the top.
- * A simple process works, a complex plan will not be understood and will fail when tested.
- * The biggest obstacle faced is the will to do it.
- * Everyone must be involved.
- * *Planning is an unnatural process; it is much more fun to do something. And the nicest thing about not planning is that failure comes as a complete surprise rather than being preceded by a period of worry and depression.* Harvey JONES. (1924 – 2008 , English businessman).

The process cycle



④ Top tips

... from Francis KELLY

1. It is about the business; not just the IT system.
2. People support what they create; everyone participates so they understand their role.
3. BCMS is more far more than Disaster Recovery
4. BCMS is not just about plans.
5. BCMS can differentiate between the quality on offer from a supplier.
6. BCMS can save money across the business (for example insurance costs)
7. It is good for a business, reputation, even after an incident.
8. Implementing a system will better define business process priorities and in turn indicate some infrastructure costs are unnecessarily high.
9. Insurance may not cover all costs.
10. A good policy which is backed by a simple process is key, but without leadership will result in mediocrity.
11. It is a living document, keep it simple.

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