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**Business Continuity Plan Template**

*A plan for ensuring resilience during business disruptions*

A close-up of a building

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# Business Continuity Plan

This manual covers policies and procedures that support [Organization Name’s] business continuity plan, its risk assessment program, and its risk treatment program. We have implemented these policies and procedures, and we retain associated records to validate their implementation. We also ensure that similar policies and procedures are implemented by our vendors, suppliers and other third parties.

## Business Impact Analysis and Risk Assessment

[Organization Name] conducts regular business impact analyses in accordance with our Business Impact Analysis Procedure using a BIA tool. [See <https://www.prevalent.net/content-library/business-impact-analysis-kit/>]

[Organization Name] uses the results of each business impact analysis to conduct a risk assessment in line with a defined Risk Assessment Procedure.

## Business Continuity Strategy

The [Organization Name] business continuity strategy is based on the results of our business impact analyses and risk assessments.

It outlines requirements for continuing/recovering prioritized activities within specific timeframes and agreed-upon capacities. Its objectives include protecting the organization’s prioritized activities by:

* Reducing the likelihood of disruptions
* Shortening the period of disruptions
* Limiting the impact of disruptions on the organization’s products and services
* Making adequate resources available to manage disruptions

### Selection of Strategies and Solutions

We select business continuity strategies and solutions based on their ability to:

* Meet requirements for continuing/recovering prioritized activities within specific time frames and agreed-upon capacities
* Account for the amount and type of risk the organization will or will not tolerate
* Account for associated costs and benefits

### Resource Requirements

Resources required for our business continuity solutions include, but are not be limited to:

* People
* Information and data
* Physical infrastructure (e.g., buildings, workplaces or other facilities and associated utilities)
* Equipment and consumables
* Information and communication technology (ICT) systems
* Transportation and logistics
* Finance
* Partners and suppliers

### Implementation of Solutions

The organization implements and maintains selected business continuity solutions so they can be activated when needed.

## Business Continuity Procedures

[Organization Name] documents its procedures supporting the business continuity strategy, including those for responding to disruptive incidents and/or continuing business activities during a disruptive incident.

Business continuity procedures incorporate the following activities:

* Incident detection
* Incident monitoring
* Internal communication
* Interaction with relevant national and/or regional risk advisory systems and/or groups
* Communication with emergency responders
* Assuring the means of communication during a disruptive incident
* Recording of relevant and vital information about the incident, including related decisions and actions

These activities are regularly exercised in line with the business continuity exercise and testing procedure.

### Response Structure

Our response structure identifies teams, roles and responsibilities for handling disruptions. Collectively, the response teams are competent to:

* Assess the nature and extent of a disruption and its potential impact
* Assess the impact against thresholds that justify initiation of a formal response
* Activate an appropriate business continuity response
* Plan related actions
* Establish priorities
* Monitor the effects of the disruption and the organization’s response
* Activate the business continuity solutions
* Communicate with relevant stakeholders, authorities and the media

For each team, there are:

* Identified personnel and alternates with the necessary responsibility, authority and competence to perform their designated roles
* Documented procedures to guide their actions, including those for response activation, operation, coordination and communication

## Warning and Communication

The organization documents and maintains procedures for:

* Communicating internally and externally with relevant stakeholders, including what, when and how to communicate
* Receiving, documenting and responding to communications from stakeholders, including any national or regional risk advisory system or equivalent
* Ensuring the availability of the means of communication during a disruption
* Facilitating structured communication with emergency responders
* Providing details of the organization’s media response following an incident, including a communications strategy
* Recording the details of the disruption, the actions taken, and the decisions made

Where applicable, the following are considered and implemented:

* Alerting stakeholders potentially impacted by an actual or impending disruption
* Ensuring appropriate coordination and communication between multiple responding organizations

The warning and communication procedures shall be exercised as part of the organization’s exercise program. [Detail where the communication procedures are held.]

## Testing Business Continuity Procedures

[Organization Name] regularly tests its business continuity procedures.

Testing meets the following requirements:

* Consistent with the scope and objectives of the business continuity plan
* Based on appropriate scenarios, with clearly defined aims and objectives
* Validates the whole of the plan’s continuity arrangements
* Minimizes risk of disruption of operations
* Produces formalized post-exercise reports with outcomes, recommendations and continual improvement actions
* Reviewed for continual improvement
* Conducted at planned intervals, in accordance with the testing schedule

# Business Continuity Strategy

## Scope

The Business Continuity Strategy provides direction for the business continuity plans based on the business continuity policy, the business impact analysis, and the risk assessment.

This strategy identifies the business continuity management arrangements that will enable [Organization Name] to recover its critical activities, or their outputs, within recovery time objectives determined in accordance with the Business Continuity Policy.

## Responsibilities

The Risk Committee is responsible for drafting the business continuity strategy and submitting it to the Board of Directors for approval.

## Procedure

The business continuity strategy is based upon the results of the business impact analysis, risk assessment and risk treatment plan.

The objectives of the business continuity strategy are to:

* Protect prioritized activities
* Stabilize, continue, resume and recover:
  + Prioritized activities
  + Their dependencies
  + Their supporting resources
* Mitigate, respond to, and manage impacts upon stakeholders and upon [Organization Name] itself
* Establish prioritized timeframes for resumption of activities within the recovery time objectives as defined in the business impact analysis

The key activities/processes of [Organization Name], are defined in the business impact analysis including their recovery time objectives.

For risks identified by the risk assessment as requiring treatment [Organization Name] applies proactive measures as recorded in the risk treatment plan. Proactive measures aim to achieve at least one of the following:

* Reduced likelihood of disruption
* Shortened period of disruption
* Minimized impact of disruption

This strategy takes in account evaluations of suppliers’ business continuity capabilities and, in the case of critical or single-source resources, their suppliers, as stakeholders will hold [Organization Name] accountable for failures.

## Strategy

[Organization Name’s] business continuity strategy is to [describe here the overall approach that you will be taking towards business continuity. This should be a relatively simple but effective statement, supported and approved by the Board of Directors or Top Management.]

The strategic issues affecting this strategy are: [Set out here the key issues that affect the your BCM plans – what alternative sites and facilities are available, which services/processes/activities you need to have working within how long, what the key dependencies within [Organization Name] and external to it are, etc. – the business continuity impact assessment is a key input here.]

* + - [Alternative sites; business continuity sites; use of a disaster recovery service, etc.]
    - [The key need immediately following disaster is what, and how will it be handled, i.e. What services have to be restored first, and how quickly does it have to happen?]
    - [What additional risk issues might there be around telecommunications and data links?]
    - [What limiting factors are there in terms of the RTO for each of the key processes/activities, and what other issues have to be taken into account?]
    - [How will staff continue working, what will they do, what records will they maintain? Use of laptops, cell phones could be paramount here – with security implications.]
    - [Storage of records and backup procedures (fireproof safes, offsite storage, how to access?) that may be essential for the BCM arrangements to actually work.]
    - [What are the repercussions of a disruption – press, customers, suppliers, others?]

On the basis of this strategy, [Organization Name] has identified the key resource requirements for maintaining continuity in response to disruptive incidents.

[Organization Name]’s key resourcesare:

* Staff – provision of services is dependent on the knowledge and skills of existing [Employees/Staff – who does what? Contacts? Descriptions of key skills in case temporary staff required to handle extra workload due to emergency, or to replace Employees/Staff fatalities/injured].
* Premises: [identify the sites that are covered by this plan].
* Work environment and associated utilities: [list].
* Facilities, equipment and consumables: [list].
* Telephony – the telephone lines, [telephone infrastructure detail, alternative telephone service providers]; mobile phones including spare batteries, chargers.
* Information technology – the data, software, hardware, file servers, PCs, printers, etc., structured cabling for data and telephony, LAN equipment, WAN equipment.
* Transportation – [cars, trucks, trains, air transport, mobile facilities; provision for dividing key personnel amongst more than one vehicle].
* Finance – [access to emergency cash, spending authorizations, {Organization Name} credit cards, provision for risk of local ATM failure]
* Partners and suppliers: [list: who? What do they do for/with us in an emergency? Contacts?]

# Business Localized Resilience Plan Template

This document should be used for each required plan. It outlines procedures necessary to support the business continuity strategy, including responding to disruptive incidents and/or continuing business activities during a disruptive incident.

Purpose and scope of the plan [From Strategy].

Persons/groups covered by the plan: [Detail all persons/groups that on site and remote]

Geographic locations/facilities covered by the plan: [Detail all offices, warehouses, etc.]

Activities/processes to be recovered: [Detail all prioritized activities based on locations/facilities above]

Timescales in which they are to be recovered: [From BIA]

Required recovery levels: [From BIA]

Situation in which the plan may be invoked: {e.g., When any prioritized activity falls within 150% of the minimum requirement stated in the BIA for that activity}.

## Responsibilities

Decision-making authority: Business Continuity Manager.

Authority to spend: [Any maximum value agreed or pre-approved spending limit authorized by the Finance Director]

The Emergency Response Teams will be responsible for directing [Organization Name]’s relations with external suppliers and with authorities. Contact details for relevant key suppliers and for those authorities who may need to be involved in dealing with aspects of dealing with the disruption/incident are detailed in this document.

The Emergency Response Teams will be responsible for informing key stakeholders of a disruption or incident and of the steps taken by [Organization Name] to recover the activities of [Organization Name]. Contact details for key stakeholders are detailed in this document.

Business Continuity Manager is responsible for completing a post-invocation review of the incident, in line with the Business Continuity review process and maintaining a record of the results of this review.

## Plan Invocation

Authority to invoke plan, and circumstances in which it may be invoked: [Detail from the BIA]

How to mobilize teams: [Detail from the Calling Tree document]

Immediate rendezvous points, alternatives and locations for subsequent meetings (incident management or command centers): [DR site locations, Remote working setup, etc.]

How to stand the team down: [Detail a brief process to activate once the incident has ended/recovery has been initiated or completed]

## The Plan

Key tasks and reference information:

* Situation and impact assessment – While the activation manager has decided to initiate the response, does the impact assessment justify continuing, or stand down?
* Initiate the recording process
* Start the Emergency Response Team checklist – As each key issue on the checklist is addressed, the team takes and executes decisions so that response actions are initiated
* Business recovery – Identify the short/medium/long RTOs for activities or products/services as appropriate
* Take decisions on the invocation of individual team/department/function, or other, level business continuity (recovery) plans

Each plan will identify when, how, where and with what resources, and to what level each activity will be recovered/resumed, together with details for reporting on status and communicating both internally and externally.

Following a disruption and plan activation, the immediate priorities for restoration of services/activities/processes are (in descending order):

Key tasks and reference information:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Task** | **Owner** | **Reference** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Steps that must be taken to protect individuals (staff, customers, third parties):

[Evacuation of staff]

[Security of alternative sites]

Steps that must be taken strategically, tactically and operationally to respond to the disruption:

[Activate the Emergency response Team]

Steps that must be taken to prevent further loss or disruption, or unavailability of prioritized activities:

[Backups, Network Quarantine, etc.]

Details on how, and under what circumstances, the Organization will communicate with employees and their relatives, key stakeholders and emergency contacts: [Key Communications]

* Details for media response:
* Communications strategy:
* Preferred interface with media:
* Guidelines or template for drafting a statement for the media:
* Appropriate spokespeople:

Requirements for record keeping. [Incident Log]

Prioritized recovery objectives and associated actions/steps, plus relevant information and details about necessary resources: [From BIA]

Details of internal and external interdependencies and interactions: [Risk Assessment]

Details of any other actions or tasks required: [Risk Assessment]

## Stakeholders

Essential stakeholder contact information: [From Calling Tree Plan and Strategy]

## Recovery

Prioritized recovery objectives and associated actions/steps, plus relevant information and details about necessary resources are recorded in the business impact analysis.

Details of internal and external interdependencies and interactions:

Details of any other actions or tasks required:

When the immediate consequences of a disruptive event have been addressed, and temporary measures activated to sustain prioritized activities, the Emergency Response Team will turn its attention to recovery by assessing losses that may have been suffered and determining:

* Is recovery back to normal practical?
* Are improved early warning systems required, to facilitate more proactive incident response?
* Are improved arrangements with partners and suppliers required, to facilitate faster or more comprehensive incident response?
* Should [Organization Name] take the opportunity to define lessons learned?

Formulate business case for recovery plans including costs, timescales.

Assess the risk and strengthen temporary measures as appropriate pending recovery.

Assess risks of returning from temporary measures to normal to avoid further incident when resuming normal activities.

# Appendices

The following appendices are contained within the separate **BIA Toolset Excel Document**

* BIA – Business Impact Assessment
* Risk Assessment
* RACI Matrix
* CTP Register – Critical Third Party
* CTP Gap Analysis
* Maintenance Requirements

# Document Control

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# About Prevalent

Prevalent takes the pain out of third-party risk management (TPRM). Companies use our software and services to eliminate the security and compliance exposures that come from working with vendors and suppliers throughout the third-party lifecycle. Our customers benefit from a flexible, hybrid approach to TPRM, where they not only gain solutions tailored to their needs, but also realize a rapid return on investment. Regardless of where they start, we help our customers stop the pain, make informed decisions, and adapt and mature their TPRM programs over time.

To learn more, please visit [www.prevalent.net](http://www.prevalent.net).

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