

# PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES FOR BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNERS: EXERCISING AND MAINTAINING BC PLANS

## **SUBJECT AREA 8: EXERCISING AND MAINTAINING BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANS (BCP)**

Pre-plan and coordinate plan exercises, and evaluate and document plan exercise results. Develop processes to maintain the currency of continuity capabilities and the Plan documents in accordance with the organization's strategic direction. Verify that the Plans will prove effective by comparison with a suitable standard, and report results in a clear and concise manner.

### **A. The Professional's Role is to:**

- 1. Pre-plan and Coordinate the Exercises**
- 2. Facilitate the Exercises**
- 3. Evaluate and Document the Exercise Results**
- 4. Update the Plan**
- 5. Report Results/Evaluation to Management**
- 6. Coordinate Ongoing Plan Maintenance**
- 7. Assist in Establishing Audit Program for the Business Continuity Plan**

### **B. The Professional Should Demonstrate a Working Knowledge in the Following Areas:**

- 1. Establish an Exercise Program**
  - a. Develop an exercise strategy that does not put the organization at risk, is practical, cost-effective, and appropriate to the organization, which ensures a high level of confidence in recovery capability
  - b. Employ a logical, structured approach (effectively analyze complex issues)
  - c. Create a suitable set of exercise guidelines
- 2. Determine Exercise Requirements**
  - a. Define exercise objectives and establish acceptable levels of success
  - b. Identify types of exercises, and their advantages and disadvantages
    - (1) Walk-throughs/tabletop
    - (2) Simulations
    - (3) Modular/component (call trees, applications, etc.)
    - (4) Functional (specific lines of business)
    - (5) Announced/planned
    - (6) Unannounced/surprised
  - c. Establish and document scope of the exercise (participants, timing, etc.)

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## **3. Develop Realistic Scenarios**

- a. Create exercise scenarios to approximate the types of incidents the organization is likely to experience and the problems associated with these incidents
- b. Map scenarios identified to different test types

## **4. Establish Exercise Evaluation Criteria and Document Findings**

- a. Develop criteria aligned with exercise objectives and scope
  - (1) Measurable and quantitative
  - (2) Qualitative
- b. Document results as per criteria identified
  - (1) Expected versus actual results
  - (2) Unexpected results

## **5. Create an Exercise Schedule**

- a. Develop a progressive, incremental schedule
- b. Set realistic time scales

## **6. Prepare Exercise Control Plan and Reports**

- a. Define exercise objectives and select an appropriate scenario
- b. Define assumptions and describe limitations
- c. Identify resources required to conduct the exercise, identify participants; ensure all understand the objectives and their roles
- d. Identify exercise adjudicators (umpires), and clearly identify all roles and responsibilities
- e. Provide an inventory of items required for the exercise and specifications for the exercise environment
- f. Provide a timetable of events and circulate to all participants, facilitators, and adjudicators
- g. In the event of a real situation occurring during an exercise, you may want to have a predetermined mechanism for cancelling the exercise and invoking your real business continuity process

## **7. Facilitate Exercises**

- a. Execute the exercise(s) as planned above
- b. Audit exercise actions

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## **8. Post-Exercise Reporting**

- a. Provide a cogent, comprehensive summary with recommendations, commensurate with levels of confidentiality requested by exercise umpire/adjudicator or as specified by the subject organization

## **9. Feedback and Monitor Actions Resulting from Exercise**

- a. Conduct debriefing sessions to review exercise results and identify action items for improvement.
- b. Identify actions and owners for recommendations; confirm owner acceptance
- c. Confirm time schedules for completing or reviewing agreed actions
- d. Monitor (and escalate where necessary) progress to completion of agreed actions

## **10. Define Plan Maintenance Scheme and Schedule**

- a. Define ownership of plan data
- b. Prepare maintenance schedules and review procedures
  - (1) Select tools
  - (2) Monitor activities
  - (3) Establish update process
  - (4) Audit and control
- c. Ensure that scheduled plan maintenance addresses all documented recommendations

## **11. Formulate Change Control Procedures**

- a. Analyze business changes with business continuity planning implications
- b. Set guidelines for feedback of changes to planning function
- c. Develop change control procedures to monitor changes
- d. Create proper version control—develop plan reissue, distribution, and circulation procedures
- e. Identify plan distribution list for circulation

## **12. Establish Status Reporting Procedures**

- a. Establish reporting procedures
  - (1) Content
  - (2) Frequency
  - (3) Recipients

## **13. Audit Objectives**

- a. Recommend and agree upon objectives for BCM-related audits.
- b. Audit the BCP's Structure, Contents, and Action Sections

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- (1) Determine if a section in the BCP addresses recovery considerations
  - (2) Evaluate the adequacy of emergency provisions and procedures
  - (3) Recommend improved positions if weaknesses exist
- c. Audit the BCP's Documentation Control Procedures
- (1) Determine whether the BCP is available to key personnel
  - (2) Review update procedures
  - (3) Demonstrate that update procedures are effective
  - (4) Examine the provision of secure backup copies of the BCP for emergency use
  - (5) List those individuals with copies of the BCP
  - (6) Ensure that BCP copies are current