

BECAUSE HOPE IS NOT A STRATEGY

Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Planning



Admit it. You have a disaster recovery plan...somewhere. But deep down inside you're not sure how your IT infrastructure would survive a flooded data center, a lightning strike or any of the other disaster-related scenarios that creep into your imagination in the middle of the night.

It could happen. Stories abound about organizations that thought they were prepared only to find out they weren't—a chipmaker that was unable to place orders for two weeks, a hospital that was hacked into by an ex-employee or a retail chain without a functioning point-of-sales system.

Scary and costly stuff. Like a snowball rolling downhill, the cost of downtime increases rapidly over time as the impact spreads across related systems. The bigger you are, the faster it rolls.

According to research by the U.S. Bureau of Labor, 93 percent of companies that suffer a significant data loss go out of business within five years.

Floods, fires, hurricanes, a reckless backhoe operator—disasters can be caused by a wide variety of sources. Many disasters are acts of nature, but

a surprising number of disasters are also caused by people, ranging from sabotage, viruses, incompetence and good old-fashioned, honest mistakes.

And you know the board of directors and CEO will hold you personally responsible.

In less time than most boards of directors have put off confronting their risk from some kind of data disaster, the dependence of a typical organization on its IT infrastructure has become absolute. IT today is how most organizations do whatever it is they do. The recent economic recession increased IT dependence as organizations eliminated many manual processes, implemented IT-based productivity initiatives and cut IT budgets at the same time.

Further compounding the problem, mission-critical applications are increasingly dependent on other applications, in a web of interdependence that functions like a living nervous system. You can't let one piece die and expect the rest of the system to survive.

BEYOND DISASTER RECOVERY

The uncomfortable truth is that focusing on disaster recovery in the data center is no longer enough. Disaster recovery needs to be addressed in the larger and longer-term context of business continuity.

By expanding the scope to the sustainability of the entire organization, it becomes increasingly apparent that IT and the business units it serves are as interdependent as the applications



residing in the IT environment. As a result, business continuity planning requires that IT and business units share in the responsibility and accountability for the overall well-being of the organization. IT cannot ensure business continuity on its own.

A phased approach to business continuity/disaster recovery (BC/DR) evaluates everything—technology, data, processes and people—that your organization depends on for its continued survival. A firm commitment to BC/DR will allow for the development of risk mitigation, continuous operations and recovery plans that can be implemented incrementally as budgets and resources allow.

A BEST-PRACTICES APPROACH TO BC/DR:

- Builds on actual data from within your organization
- Involves stakeholders across IT and business units
- Integrates and enhances what is already in place
- Establishes realistic benchmarks
- Adapts as you progress through the phases
- Ensures compliance with relevant regulatory agencies
- Articulates a comprehensive BC/DR strategy
- Keeps you in control at all times
- Provides peace of mind

This kind of holistic approach to BC/DR not only ensures your business can survive but also encourages the kind of open, ongoing communication between IT and business units that ensures your organization succeeds.

A WAY OF LIFE

BC/DR planning is not a one-time project. It is a living process like a healthy diet or an exercise routine. The scope of an effective BC/DR plan needs to be as broad as the organization it is

designed to protect, ensuring every detail is accounted for and all of the right stakeholders are involved. Most organizations have already conducted some level of business continuity planning. Many, however, have stopped short of making it a way of life.

Implementing BC/DR has earned a reputation at many organizations for false starts. A classic example involves hiring a former disaster recovery plan administrator and thinking the organization will now be protected. Another false start is isolating a single “mission-critical” application and putting in place everything needed to ensure it will run, only to find out it depends on several other applications to actually accomplish anything.

The high end on a sliding scale of false starts is reserved for requesting a quote from a big-name data availability firm or systems vendor, and then getting a seven-figure number that your board of directors finds scarier than any potential disaster, causing them to put off a decision. For an IT director, this option does have the advantage of effectively passing the BC/DR hot potato to the board of directors. But the end result is nothing gets accomplished.

SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

The best approach is to acknowledge that the scope of an effective BC/DR plan is as broad as the organization it is designed to protect. Then, design and implement a phased approach that ensures every detail is accounted for and all of the right stakeholders are involved.

This is admittedly a long journey. The first step is the development of a road map. Says Logicalis Professional Services Consultant Dan McMahan, “The business continuity road map lays out how you can get from where you are now to accomplishing your business continuity objectives. It identifies how you tie in each one of your platforms, as well as your asset management systems, and what options you

have to out- or co-source the services required. The road map also projects a budget that you can take to the board of directors that shows specifically what needs to be done, over what period of time and how much it will cost.”

To clearly establish the “You are here” point on the road map, a business continuity team needs to include technology experts and business analysts who conduct a detailed evaluation of your entire IT infrastructure, as well as the people, data, processes and plans that your organization depends on to function effectively.

A thorough examination of your organization’s current resilience provides the unique data from which you can take action to improve the likelihood of your organization’s ongoing well-being.

BETTER OPTIONS

Cataloging and rating the threats to your survivability has the additional benefits of demystifying and making them approachable and resolvable. Logicalis recommends a three-phased approach to systematically accomplishing business continuity goals, as well as any regulatory requirements. The three phases are:

Phase 1: Business Impact Analysis (BIA). This phase includes discovery, situation analysis, risk quantification/qualification, needs analysis and budgeting. A key deliverable of Phase 1 is a gap analysis report complete with data analysis and recommendations on risk mitigation.

Phase 2: Business Continuity Planning (BCP). This phase identifies strategic and tactical options and includes solution plotting, preprocurement, budget details and the creation of the BC/DR plan.

Phase 3: Business Continuity Program Development. This phase outlines technical development, procurement and initial implementation.

Each phase contributes data and policy improvements to the next phase in a process that reliably and predictably takes you toward your goal of sustainability.

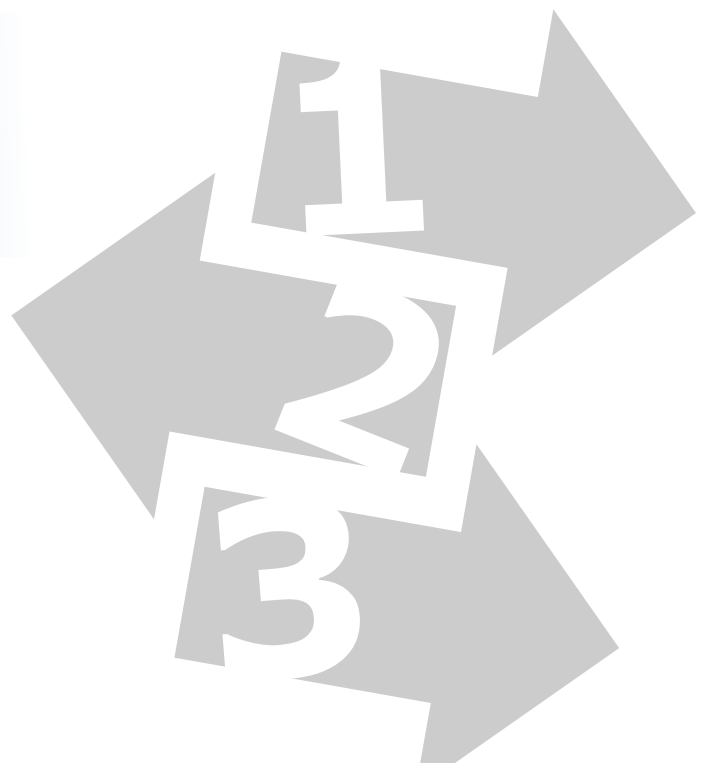
“There is a decision process at the end of each step,” McMahan says. “We routinely go back to management with our findings, recommendations and budgets and let them decide if they want to go left, right or up the middle, and we adjust our road map accordingly with their input.”

EMBEDDED IN YOUR CULTURE

Because a BC/DR plan needs to be tightly embedded in your culture as well as your technology, processes and operations, it cannot be done for you—it has to be done with you.

Technical team members use a range of tools and procedures to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of your total IT environment. While the technical experts are at work, business analysts conduct interviews with key business leaders to establish the procedures that need to be in place in the event of any kind of IT outage.

Determining the appropriate technology that will be required is often the easy part. An often



more difficult challenge is negotiating internally what levels of risk different departments within an organization are willing to accept for their applications and data.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

There are two key considerations to determine acceptable levels of disaster recovery:

1. Recovery Time Objective (RTO):
How fast data must be recovered
2. Recovery Point Objective (RPO):
How much data you can afford to lose

“Immediately” and “none,” respectively, are the two most common answers from department heads.

Establishing appropriate, realistic and affordable RTO and RPO levels needs to be negotiated between the IT department and business leaders. It’s often a balancing act. If the business is not willing to pay for the technology to eliminate interruptions, then the business has to pay the additional expense to develop, implement and train staff on downtime procedures (manual workarounds), which will be used as temporary stop-gap measures when automated processes are not available. Having an outside, unbiased business continuity planner present during these discussions helps them proceed to a mutually acceptable conclusion.

Once realistic recovery objectives are identified, developing a tiered strategy that meets the specific requirements and budgetary constraints of your organization is relatively straightforward.

Options abound for tier-one mission-critical applications that need some form of automated failover (short RTO), and less expensive technologies are available for applications that can be recovered more slowly.

Logicalis Solutions Architect Bill Mansfield says there are two key aspects to business continuity from a technical point of view: high availability and continuous operations.

High availability means you can endure, or be reliant against, unexpected failures in your data center. “It is now possible to have high availability systems that are campus- and even metro-wide,” Mansfield says. “If I lose services in my main building, the applications keep running in another building with no loss of application availability.”

Continuous operations means you can endure, or be reliant against, planned or expected events— such as upgrades, maintenance and service” to avoid the abbreviations— that need to occur without interruption of service. Providing continuous availability requires a deep understanding of how applications fit together. A full dependency map needs to identify all of the elements—hardware and software—that form the complex web of technology required to provide services to a user.



"In healthcare environments, practically the whole data center is required to be online to provide a relatively simple service to end users," Mansfield says. "The whole data center is starting to become interdependent down to the byte."

Once you have identified all of the interdependencies, Mansfield says, it's a "relatively" straightforward, case-by-case process to provide whatever level of availability is deemed necessary. Projects identified by the evaluation process could include everything from revising change management procedures and implementing virtualization and replication to improving backup systems.

CHOICES

The key deliverables that result from a comprehensive BC/DR plan are choices. You get to decide what to do before a disaster instead of afterward or, worse, in the middle of one. Better yet, you get to choose what steps you and your CFO are willing to take to reduce or eliminate risks to your organization's continuity of operations.

Having the knowledge gives you the power to act. A solid, tested BC/DR plan allows you to be proactive, not reactive.


Take, for example, Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio. Sinclair is widely acclaimed as one of the top community colleges in the nation. The largest regional provider of online education, with more than 180 different online courses, Sinclair's enrollment is rapidly approaching 30,000 students.

Because Sinclair's curriculum spans a broad array of professions in many industries, Sinclair IT Director Scott McCollum says the IT department has to support as many as 700 applications.

As a result, the scope of the school's IT storage and business continuity requirements can be daunting. That is why Sinclair IT Director Scott McCollum turned to Logicalis when it came time to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the college's virtualization and business continuity options.

"Logicalis helped us figure out our alternatives and clear the fog from the hundreds of ways there are of doing any one thing. It takes a lot of research and experience with technologies that we don't deal with on a regular basis," McCollum says. "When we have a complex challenge, we bring Logicalis in and pick their brains to help us figure out where to go."

The information and analysis Logicalis provided McCollum through the business continuity process gave him real data he and his team could use for planning, McCollum adds. "There are shorter-term things, like figuring out how to change disaster recovery processes, and longer-term things that tie into the annual budget and planning process. A project like this is never really finished. You just keep making incremental improvements," he says.



Read the complete Sinclair Community College case study at www.us.logicalis.com/sinclair

CONFIDENCE

A comprehensive business continuity plan is becoming a requirement for compliance in healthcare and other industries, as well as for governmental entities. Major customers are also requiring their suppliers to have a plan for their continuous operations.

But don't wait to be told. A good time to talk seriously about business continuity is any time your organization is facing a significant change,

i.e., a major systems upgrade, acquiring another company or being acquired. Success is one of the best reasons to ensure nothing happens that would suddenly turn your fortunes in the opposite direction.

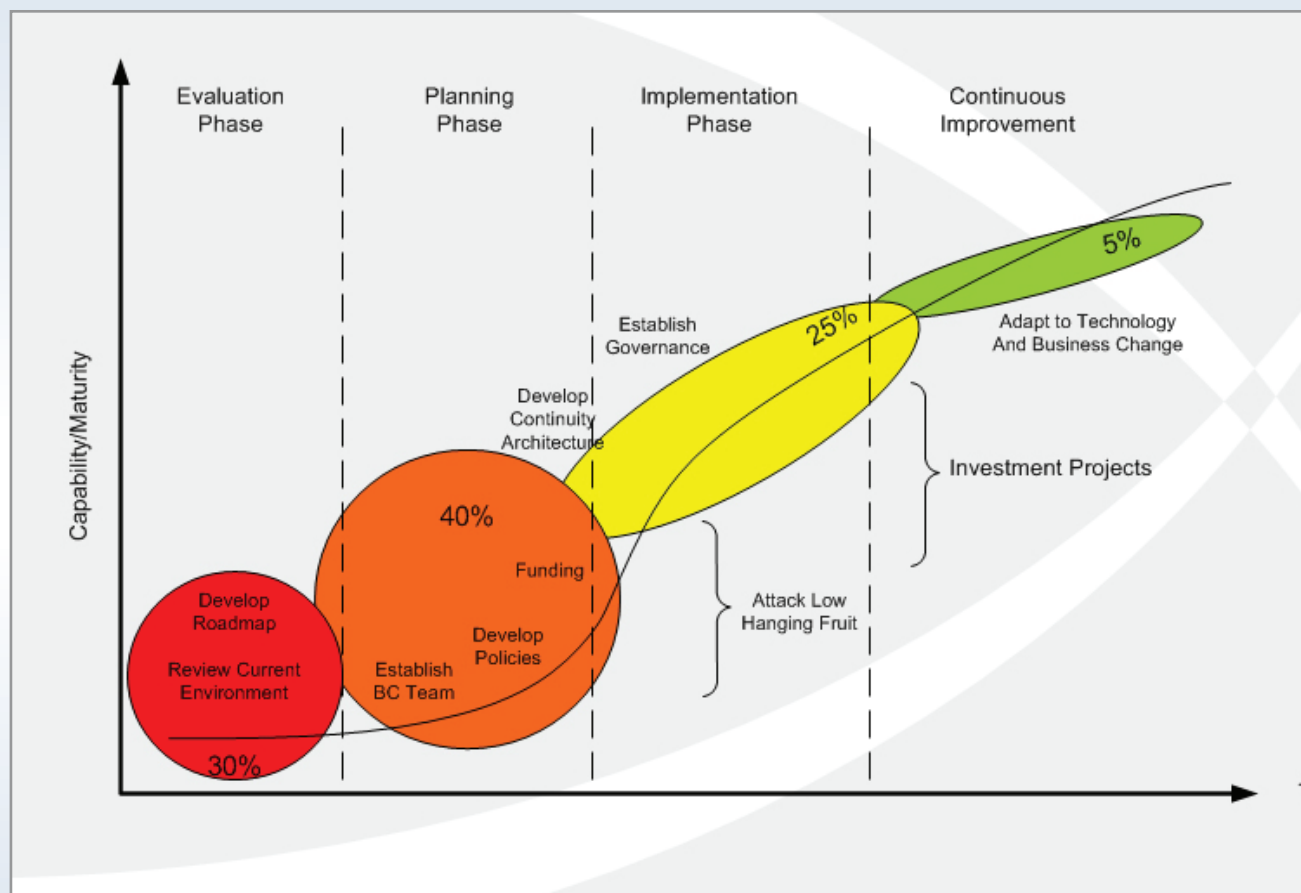
The true value of business continuity planning is not limited to technology. Done correctly, the exercise of developing and implementing a thorough business continuity plan opens ongoing conversations between IT and business units, which contributes to a sense of trust as well as a shared confidence in their combined abilities

to work together as an efficient team to face whatever challenges lay ahead.

Because hope is not a strategy. Ensure the continued well-being of your organization with a strong Business Continuity/ Disaster Recovery plan.

Take charge of your future.

EVOLUTION OF A BUSINESS CONTINUITY PROGRAM



Created by Bill Mansfield, Logicalis

ABOUT LOGICALIS

Logicalis is an international provider of integrated information and communications technology (ICT) solutions and services founded on a superior breadth of knowledge and expertise in communications and collaboration, data center optimization, application development and integration, and outsourcing and managed services.

With international headquarters in the UK, Logicalis Group employs more than 1,900 people worldwide, including highly trained service specialists who design, specify, deploy and manage complex ICT infrastructures to meet the needs of more than 6,500 corporate and public sector customers. To achieve this, Logicalis maintains strong partnerships with technology leaders such as Cisco, HP, IBM, and Microsoft.

The Logicalis Group has annualized revenues in excess of \$1 billion from operations in the UK, the US, Germany, Latin America, and Asia Pacific, and is fast establishing itself as one of the leading IT and communications service providers, specializing in the areas of advanced technologies and services.

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