
Understanding...

how to use IT and communications technology to stay in business every day



Understanding...

how to use IT and communications technology to stay in business every day

Contents

- 03 Introduction: Why is business continuity planning important?
- 04 Risk One: Losing data
- 06 Risk Two: Damage to your equipment and premises
- 08 Risk Three: You can't get to the office
- 12 You don't have to do it alone
- 14 Business continuity – an opportunity not a threat

Introduction: Why is business continuity planning important?

We live in a period of unprecedented competition. Thanks to the growth of the internet and mobile technology, consumers have more choice than ever before, and loyalty is becoming harder and harder to generate. This means that business continuity – making sure your company runs smoothly, even in the face of difficult or unexpected circumstances – is vital for keeping your customers happy.

For some, this business continuity challenge is a source of worry. But there is a more exciting view – that it is an opportunity, a chance to win business and strengthen your position in the market.

Recent research discovered that 32 per cent of the UK's small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) believe operational downtime doesn't cost their business anything¹. However, government figures show the average cost of a downtime incident to a UK company is actually £8,000 to £17,000².

In this guide we aim to show you how to cope with different kind of threats – from the loss of data, to damage to your IT equipment, to not being able to get to your office at all – so that your business can continue running smoothly at all times.

To find out more about how BT can help your company,
visit our website at www.bt.com/business

¹ Research carried out by YouGov and commissioned by BT Business, September 2007.

² The Department for Trade and Industry (now BERR) estimate that, taking into account different factors such as business disruption, direct financial loss and recovery costs, the average total cost of a UK company's worst incident is likely to be in the range of £8,000 to £17,000.

Risk One: Losing data

Data is the lifeblood of the modern organisation. Emails, contact numbers, sales spreadsheets – every business needs access to this kind of information 24/7. Quite simply, if you lose data, you could lose customers. But if the data you need is always available, customers will come back time and time again.

Causes of data loss

- **Power outages.** Problems resulting from disruptions to power supplies accounted for more than one quarter of business disruptions in 2005³. If you aren't able to get online or access the company system, you could lose precious time in the battle to win new business and keep existing customers happy.
- **Everyday accidents.** You spill your coffee on your PC. You knock your laptop on the floor. You forget that your Blackberry is in your pocket and sit on it by mistake. These common problems can mean you lose access to vital data.
- **Theft.** Nationwide was fined £980,000 by the Financial Services Authority for security lapses after a laptop containing confidential data was stolen from an employee's home in 2006. For SMEs however, the main risk is not fines from regulatory bodies, it is the problems posed if data is only stored on one laptop or PDA, and that device is stolen⁴.
- **Loss.** The government faced some stern questions at the end of 2007 after two discs containing the records of 25 million child benefit claimants got lost in the post. For SMEs, discs or data being lost in this way could cause serious problems.

The postal strikes that took place in autumn 2007 caused many such problems, with the subsequent backlog causing items to be delayed or even lost.

What can you do?

- Data backup is the most effective way to safeguard important contacts, files, emails.
- Leading providers will give you the option to back up your data daily or weekly on to their remotely hosted secure servers.
- You should be able to retrieve that data from the backup provider within a set period of time. Your business cannot afford to be out of action for too long, so look for a supplier that can guarantee access to your files in a matter of hours. Also ensure they can have an engineer visit your offices to fix any on-site problems – for example, if a server stops working.
- Ensure you pick a provider that charges a fixed monthly fee. Monthly payments, rather than a one-off lump sum, make business continuity planning an affordable necessity rather than an unaffordable luxury.
- Some providers offer something called an 'uninterruptible power supply service'. This means they are able to guarantee that even if a power cut takes place locally, your communications equipment will keep functioning as normal. While competitors may experience downtime, your phone lines, PCs and IT infrastructure will keep running as normal.
- Human error is a common source of business continuity problems. When people join your company, give them training on areas such as sensible use of laptops, how to use data backup, where to store customer details and so on. It may also be helpful to provide annual 'refresher' courses to your other members of staff.

Some of the most unusual causes of business continuity emergencies...⁵

- World War II bombs discovered in a nearby building site caused a company to evacuate all staff.
- A cleaner unplugged the main server of one office in order to use a vacuum cleaner.
- A sewage blockage rendered toilets inoperable forcing a business to temporarily abandon the building.
- When youths set fire to a wheelie bin, employees at one firm couldn't get into their offices.

³ Source: Silicon.com. 'Revealed: Strangest business tech emergencies' by Steve Ranger. Published Friday 27 April 2007

⁴ Source: Silicon.com. 'Nationwide fined nearly £1m for security lapses' by Tim Ferguson. Published Wednesday 14 February 2007

⁵ Source: Silicon.com. 'Revealed: Strangest business tech emergencies' by Steve Ranger. Published Friday 27 April 2007

Risk Two: Damage to your equipment and premises

Damage to hardware is currently the most frequent cause of business continuity issues, affecting 48 per cent of businesses questioned in a recent survey⁶. If your server suddenly fails, you could lose access to vital documents and information. Customers are unlikely to be sympathetic when your competitors are just the click of a mouse away.

Causes of damage to equipment and premises

- **Climate change.** The flooding in the summer of 2007 led to countless UK businesses experiencing damage to property and equipment. Telephone systems were ruined, IT hardware damaged beyond repair, vital files and data lost for ever – some businesses never recovered. Meanwhile, in July 2006, temperatures in London hit 100°F. This meant there was extra pressure on the systems needed to cool essential computer equipment such as servers. Further afield, in places like California, forest fires caused by soaring temperatures threatened to devastate offices and office equipment.
- **Accidents.** In the previous section we described some of the low-level accidents capable of causing data to be lost. The same kind of incidents pose similar problems to your hardware. And on a larger scale, industrial accidents can be considerably more damaging. 2005's Buncefield oil refinery fire, for example, took several days to put out, keeping employees away from the plant for an extended period. If an accident causes servers, PCs, or premises to be put out of action, you need to find alternatives quickly, otherwise customers may go elsewhere.
- **Wear and tear.** Equipment can stop working simply as a result of wear and tear. Whatever the cause of damage, you need replacement equipment or premises to be made available as speedily as possible.

What can you do?

- Services are available that deliver replacement items of hardware to your office within hours. Look for providers that have partnerships with the leading IT equipment brands, and that offer equipment – such as servers – that are pre-configured in the same way as your previous equipment.
- Look into companies that provide backup office facilities so that, in the event of an emergency, you can be re-located within hours. These services provide office space, furniture, and IT and communications equipment.
- If problems occur to your communications systems, you need help fast. The best providers will offer their services 24/7 and also give you a single point of contact – one number for all repair issues, whether related to landlines, mobile phones or broadband. This helps to speed up problem resolution, ensuring you minimise any damage done to customer relations.

Case study: IGI Group – Expecting the unexpected

Having reviewed its contingency plans, insurer IGI Group decided to add two services from BT – Rapid Divert and Workplace Recovery. Rapid Divert enables the fast and efficient diversion of incoming direct dial calls to mobile phones, home numbers or temporary locations.

Workplace Recovery provides access to office space with all the IT systems your business relies on. Traditional IT disaster recovery plans focus on retrieving data and offering access to IT systems. These BT services provide the other key ingredient – the physical space and equipment needed to keep your business running smoothly.

“Now, should disaster strike we can be up and running within hours, with minimal disruption to staff and customers.” – Sarah Knowles, IT Support Manager, IGI Group

⁶ Source: Silicon.com. 'Revealed: Strangest business tech emergencies' by Steve Ranger. Published Friday 27 April 2007

Risk Three: You can't get to the office

Being unable to get to your office can cause severe business problems. Without access to contacts, emails, all the files saved on the company system, you can lose customers and miss out on new business opportunities.

Causes of not being able to reach the office

- **Travel issues.** London Underground experiences strikes by workers most years. Meanwhile, a stoppage by public sector workers brought France to a halt in late 2007. The results are the same – thousands of people unable to get to work to access the data and information needed to do their jobs.
- **Climate change.** Research by the Cabinet Office found that one in five IT organisations was affected by extreme weather in 2006⁷. A sudden cold snap or snow storm can cause havoc on the roads, and lead to damage to your premises.
- **Worst-case scenarios.** Terrorist attacks, arson, a pandemic of an illness like flu. These are unlikely to occur but are nevertheless possible. 70 London companies took part in a six-week exercise in late 2006 simulating a flu outbreak. Such a crisis is considered by the government to be one of the leading risks to the UK⁸. But if people are unable to freely move about, they still need to try to stay productive so that their businesses can continue to function.

What can you do?

- Consider flexible working technologies. More than 3.4 million people – 12 per cent of the working population – regularly or permanently work from home, according to the Office for National Statistics⁹.
- These technologies are used to boost productivity, but they are equally effective as a means of ensuring business continuity in the face of an unexpected event. They allow you to remotely access the company system and get hold of files, contact details, calendar entries, even access your office voicemail.
- Wi-Fi. In the UK there are thousands of Wi-Fi hotspots, where users can access the internet at broadband speeds and log on to the company system. This means they can stay productive without going in to the office.
- Some smart-phones are capable of 'synchronising' data with the user's office computer. Wherever you are, you can receive emails and calendar updates in real-time. The benefit of this is that you are always up-to-date and in touch, even if you're not able get to the place where you normally work.
- Forwarded calls. Services are also available that can automatically divert all phone calls made to the office to users' mobile or home phones. If the office is out of action, customer enquiries can still be handled with the usual efficiency.



⁷ Source: Silicon.com. 'Firms urged to plan for extreme weather' by Tim Ferguson. Published Monday 19 march 2007

⁸ Source: Silicon.com. 'Flu simulation puts spotlight on home-working' by Steve Ranger. Published Friday 5 January 2007

⁹ Source: Silicon.com. 'Remote and mobile working tech essential' by Andy McCue. Published Friday 18 May 2007

Case study: ESFAC – Office facilities, even when you can't get to the office

ESFAC is a growing business providing medical training services. With a growing number of calls and emails being received every day, downtime was likely to result in lost business. To guard against this, the directors of ESFAC decided to try BT Office Anywhere.

With the BT Office Anywhere smart-phone they now have real-time access to email, calendar, contacts, and documents even when away from the office. If they're unable to get to the office, productivity is not harmed, helping the business to carry on growing.

“BT Office Anywhere really does enable us to have office facilities wherever we are.” – Kim Coe, ESFAC

Creating a business continuity plan

In a recent study, 65 per cent of SMEs in the UK admitted they do not have a business continuity plan, and 15 per cent confessed that a lack of understanding was putting them off¹⁰.

It's for this reason that it can make sense to work with a specialist in business continuity, to help remove the complexity.

The types of incident you wish to plan for, and the level of detail you wish to go into, will depend on the nature of your business, your location, your market sector – a large number of factors. Here's an idea of the range of help that's available:

- Low-level advice covering the basics of business continuity planning, right through to detailed help developing a full business continuity plan.
- Auditing. Specialists can come in to your company to examine your current business continuity plan, examining every detail and considering a wide range of eventualities.
- Rehearsal. Rehearsals are a useful way to check the effectiveness of your plans. The best providers will offer a full-day exercise to work through a real-life scenario.



¹⁰ Research carried out by YouGov on behalf of BT Business, September 2007.

You don't have to do it alone

Business continuity can be a complex area. Even for businesses with their own IT departments, specialist help is frequently required. To help you get to grips with how to select a business continuity specialist that is right for your company, we've put together a checklist:

Breadth and depth

- Does the supplier have the infrastructure and the expert personnel to meet all of your business continuity needs?
- Does the supplier have quality products, relationships with a range of leading software and hardware vendors, and the ability to integrate business continuity technology with the rest of your IT infrastructure?

Support, as and when you need it

- If extreme weather conditions mean your offices are damaged, can they arrange for interim offices to be set up within 24 hours?
- If your server or PCs break down, can they provide replacements, configured to the same specifications as your old ones, and using the same leading brands as your old equipment, in a matter of hours?
- If a fire or other disaster strikes in the middle of the night and you lose vital data, how quickly do the provider's data recovery services allow you to retrieve it?

Track record

- Ask about any experience they may have in your industry, and with businesses of your size. Find out whether they are financially viable and able to meet your requirements in the foreseeable future.

National or local?

- Does the supplier have the clout of a big business, but with the local knowledge of a small player? This is especially important if you require an engineer to be sent to your offices within one working day.



Business continuity – an opportunity not a threat

As our reliance on technology continues to grow, the ability to keep IT and communications systems running smoothly at all times is becoming an increasing source of competitive advantage.

Customers will develop loyalty if they know you will deliver on time, to a consistently high standard, every time. Having IT and communications systems that function effectively, no matter what, is central to making that happen.

The technology and support you need to maintain business continuity is out there. Use it to help your business get ahead.

For more information call **0800 032 1781**.

Useful business continuity websites

Continuity Institute

www.thebci.org

Continuity Central – Business continuity information resource

www.continuitycentral.com

Risk Management UK Resilience – Communicating Risk, a toolkit

www.ukresilience.info

Financial Sector Continuity

www.fsc.gov.uk

MI5 – Security Advice for Businesses

www.mi5.gov.uk

Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory reform – 10-point business continuity plan:

www.berr.gov.uk/sectors/infosec/infosecadvice/continuitymanagement/10pointplan/page33397.html



Offices worldwide

The services described in this publication are subject to availability and may be modified from time to time. Services and equipment are provided subject to British Telecommunications plc's respective standard conditions of contract. Nothing in this publication forms any part of any contract.

© British Telecommunications plc 2009
Registered office: 81 Newgate Street, London. EC1A 7AJ
Registered in England No. 1800000.

Printed in England.

PHME 54651/06/09

