

Evaluating Your Organization's Current State of Preparedness

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Objectives

- Why measure the effectiveness of a business continuity plan (BCP)?
- What are the key benchmarks of a good business continuity plan?
- What steps can we take to improve *resilience* before, during and after a disruption?



Being Prepared – Why Measure BCP Effectiveness?

Industry observations:

- One size does not fit all – benchmarking effectiveness varies by the Organization's **critical business functions** and risk tolerance of senior leadership.
- Not one and done – business continuity is frequently devalued into a checkbox exercise.
- Continuity of change – business continuity planning does not keep up with the rapid change of business.
- Misguided level of assurance in the **volume** of business continuity documentation means the plan is *good*.



Emad's Law: more BCP documents become exponentially harder to maintain.



Key Benchmarks of Preparedness

- **Accuracy** – is the plan complete and cover all areas of the critical business function?
 - Can the disrupted critical business functions recover within their established RTO/RPO thresholds?
 - Are the right people involved to support the plan?
 - Are all the resources and dependencies identified?
 - Are all the key tasks, processes and workarounds complete and up to date?
- **Simplicity** – can people easily understand and implement the plan under duress?
- **Flexibility** – is the plan *nimble* enough to adapt to changing disruptive conditions?
- **Duration** – will the plan sustain critical business functions beyond the established RTO/RPO threshold?

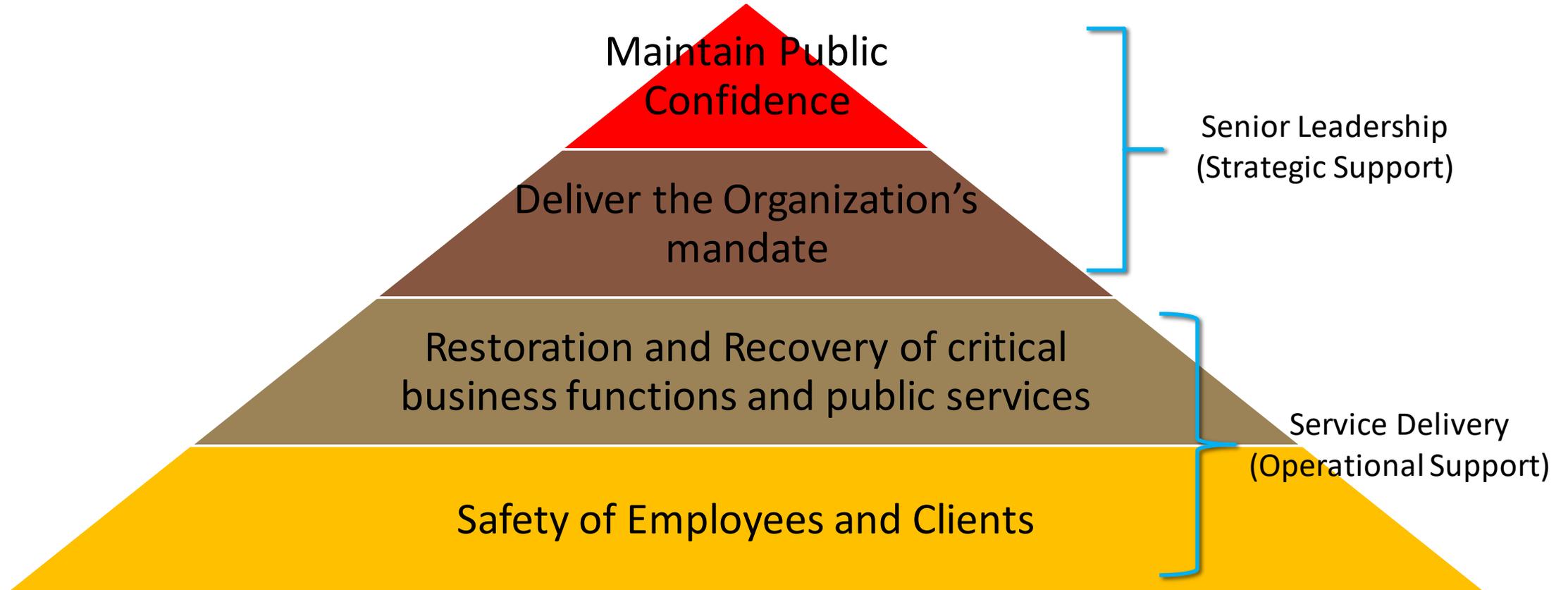
Pro-Tip: The term business continuity ‘plan’ is not always a single document, but can be a collection of plans; each designed to respond to potential threats that may disrupt the Organization. This is known as “all-hazards planning.”



Improving Preparedness before, during and after a disruption



Align Business Continuity Planning to Public Service Strategy



Establish Business Continuity Policy



Pro-Tip: the Business Continuity policy should be simple enough for all employees to understand and implement.

- Links to related regulations and policies such as
 - Emergency Management,
 - Risk Management,
 - Privacy and
 - IT Security policies.
- Embeds business continuity in corporate culture
- Generates support from senior leadership
- Provides roles and responsibilities
 - Executive Sponsor
 - Business Continuity Coordinators
 - Incident Commanders
 - Managers and Subject Matter Experts



Adopt Industry Best Practices



Pro-Tip: start small when adopting a best practice and gradually expand through the rest of the organization.

- ~~Business Continuity using Excel sheets works.~~
 - It doesn't.
- A best practice covers key areas to enhance organizational resilience.
- Best practices are frequently reviewed and updated to keep up with **emerging threats** and **improvements** in business continuity planning.
- Recommended best practices:
 - DRI Canada – Professional Practices
 - BCI Canada – Good Practice Guidelines
 - CSA Z1600
 - ISO 22301 **recommended for mature BCM programs*



Involve Program Owners



- Establish a corporate resource to support consistent business continuity planning throughout the organization.
- Facilitate business continuity workshops that include Program Owners – e.g. Managers, employees, subject matter experts.
- Program Owners provide business priorities and operational details to make the plan effective, accurate and nimble.
- Program Owners also implement the plan.

Pro-Tip: Program Owners know their business, but may not be familiar with business continuity planning. Facilitated sessions work best.



Training & Exercises



Pro-Tip: Training should be delivered at least quarterly.
Exercises should be conducted at least once annually.

- Help stakeholders become familiar with the plan, roles and responsibilities.
- Senior Leadership should support and be included in training and exercises.
- Start small and increase exercise complexity with achieved proficiency.
- Conduct a lessons learned session post exercise
 - Identify strengths and opportunities in the plan.
 - Develop action items and assign owners.
 - Lessons Learned can be used as a benchmark to measure progress.



During a Business Continuity Incident

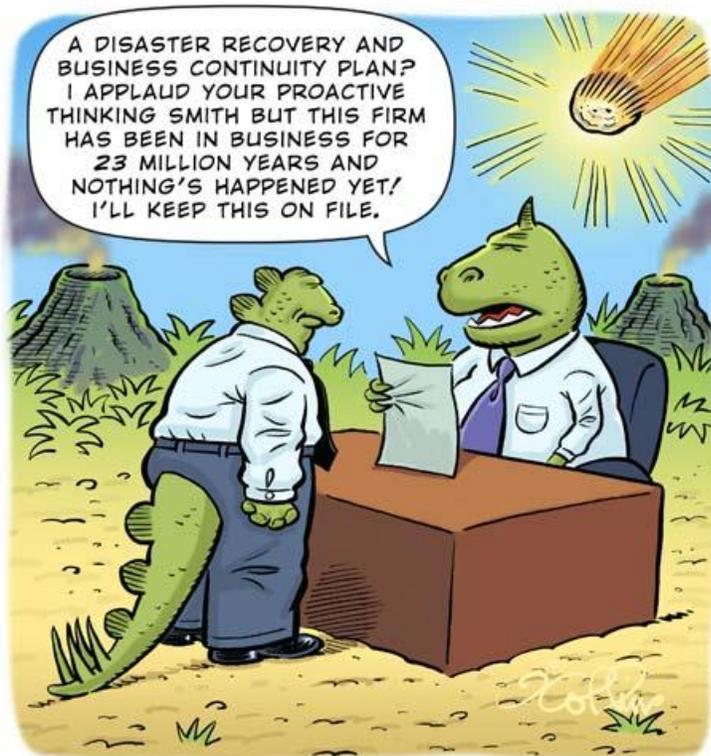


Pro-Tip: A *grab the wheel* approach demonstrates lack of confidence in business continuity planning. No incident is “too big” if business continuity practices have been applied effectively.

- Role of Senior Leadership.
 - Balance operational vs BCP needs.
 - Review reports, approve major decisions.
 - Provide strategic guidance to the IMT.
 - Resolve emerging issues and risks.
 - Communicate to employees, clients and the public.
- Role of Incident Management Team (IMT)
 - Follow the business continuity plan, making tactical adjustments as required to restore and recover disrupted critical business functions.
 - Provide timely updates to Senior Leadership.
 - Escalate emerging issues and risks.
 - Conduct a Lessons Learned post incident.



Summary – Evaluating Preparedness



Business Continuity is a *philosophy*, not a plan or a template.

- Align Business Continuity to Public Service Strategy.
- Establish a Corporate Business Continuity Policy.
- Adopt an industry best practice.
- Establish a centralized corporate resource to support consistent and effective business continuity planning throughout the organization.
- Involve Program Owners throughout the business continuity planning cycle.
- Define benchmarks when exercising business continuity plans.
- Conduct annual business continuity exercises increasing complexity with growing confidence.
- Track lessons learned and report plan improvements to Senior Leadership.



Thank You

