

ISO 22301 Business Continuity Management

Business Continuity Planning is the management process that provides a framework to ensure the resilience of your business to any eventuality and the ability to recover from any disruptions. Business Continuity Planning helps ensure continuity of service to your key customers and the protection of your reputation and brand.

Business Continuity provides a basis for planning to ensure your long-term survivability following a disruptive event. The Plans need to be clear, concise and tailored to the needs of the business. Business Continuity should become part of the way you perform business. It is better to plan for incidents which may affect your business, rather than having to "catch up" when a problem occurs.

Business Continuity Management therefore, is a comprehensive process to ensure the continuation and improvement of business in the face of whatever challenges your firm may face and needs to be considered not only by large businesses but smaller businesses too.

There are many risks that may threaten your organisation by disrupting your business processes. These risks include traditional emergencies like fires, floods, earthquakes and tornados as well as risks from physical and cyber terrorism, cyber crime, computer and telecommunications failures, theft, employee sabotage, and labour strife. Any one of these can be very disruptive for your business.



What are the benefits?

Business Continuity minimises disruptions and financial loss during even minor events. This means increased reliability and productivity for your company, thus delivering competitive advantage and increased market share. Third party accreditation demonstrates to stakeholders the enhanced capability to handle disruption and protect brand reputation.

Business Continuity Management is a tool used to identify the threats to your company's key products, services and assets. By assessing the potential impact this could have on your organisation, you can then plan and exercise controls to minimise the threats and aid prompt resumption of service. This will not only assist reduction in insurance costs, but will also help to protect market share, reputation and brand.

Companies that don't have good business continuity plans often fail to survive a business disruption. Good continuity planning can make the difference and in the long run make companies more profitable.

What is ISO 22301?

ISO 22301 is a standard which identifies the process, principles and terminology of business continuity planning, providing a basis for understanding, developing and implementing Business Continuity Management within an organisation to provide confidence in business-to-business and business-to-customer dealings.

The International Standard sets out six elements to the Business Continuity Management process:-

- Business Continuity Management - Enables the business continuity capability to be both established (if necessary) and maintained in a manner appropriate to the size and complexity of the organisation.
- Understanding the organisation - The activities associated with "Understanding the organisation" provide information that enables prioritisation of an organisation's products and services, identification of critical supporting activities and the resources that are required to deliver them.
- Determining business continuity strategies - This allows an appropriate response to be chosen for each product or service, such that the organisation can continue to deliver those products and services at the time of disruption.
- Developing and implementing a BCM response - This involves developing incident management, business continuity and business recovery plans that detail the steps to be taken during and after an incident to maintain or restore operations.
- BCM exercising, maintaining and reviewing BCM arrangements - This leads to the organisation being able to demonstrate the extent to which its strategies and plans are complete, current and accurate and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Embedding BCM in the organisation's culture - This enables BCM to become part of the organisation's core values and instills confidence in all stakeholders in the ability of the organisation to cope with disruptions.



Is Business Continuity Management workable?

Plans cannot be considered reliable until they are tested and have been proved to be workable. This should involve validating plans, rehearsing with key staff and testing systems which are relied upon to deliver resilience.

Not only should plans be put in place, but they should be reviewed regularly and kept up to date. Particular attention may need to be paid to changes to staff and the organisational structure, changes in the organisation's functions or services, details of suppliers and alterations in the organisation's strategic objectives.

If you are interested in implementing ISO 22301 or would like further information contact **Blackmores** on +44 (0) 1462 450591 or e-mail enquiries@blackmoresuk.com

Further information can also be found on www.blackmoresuk.com