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Whitepaper:

How to create a business continuity plan for your Florida business

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Did you know that [54 percent of companies](#) have experienced downtime that lasted for more than eight hours in the past five years?

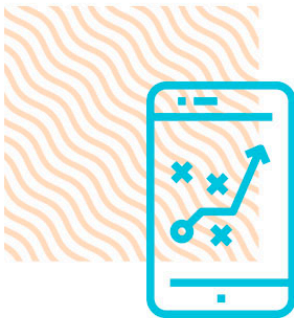
Power outages, hardware failures, malware attacks — all of these events can seriously impact your business in Florida. That's why it's so important to have a proper business continuity plan in place.



A business continuity plan provides you with a safeguard in the event of a natural disaster or emergency. The result? Less downtime, so you can carry on with your day-to-day business operations. Here's how to create a business continuity plan of your own.

What Exactly is a Business Continuity Plan?

A business continuity plan (BCP) is a strategy that minimizes future risk to your business. Think of it as a protective shield that defends your company against threats like malware attacks, hardware failure, and even human error.



“ Business continuity planning is the creation of a strategy through the recognition of threats and risks facing a company, with an eye to ensuring that personnel and assets are protected and able to function in the event of a disaster.”

– Investopedia

For all Florida businesses, a BCP is incredibly important. Here's why:

- **Adverse Weather:** Floods, tornadoes, and storms can damage your business premises and IT infrastructure, especially here in Florida. A BCP will help you plan for these events, so you can minimize downtime and optimize business operations.
- **Malware:** [The average cost of a malware attack](#) on a business is \$2.4 million. You can minimize the risk of a third-party attack with a comprehensive BCP. For some cities in Florida, [like Tampa and Orlando](#), this risk holds even more weight.
- **Human Error:** Insider threats are just as damaging to your business as external ones. Human error, for example, can jeopardize the reputation of your brand and result in downtime.

Related: Your 5-part guide to everyday data disasters

What should you include in your BCP

You should refer to your BCP in the event of an emergency or disaster. Your plan will outline the procedures that you'll need to follow to reduce downtime in your business. You can also use your BCP throughout the year to test your disaster recovery procedures and plan for the future.



“A comprehensive business continuity plan provides a roadmap for continuance and/or restoration of mission-critical functions during and after a disaster, such as a fire, flood, tornado or even a disease epidemic,” says TechRepublic. “Your BCP must be thought out, written down, and distributed to key personnel well ahead of any incident that could cause a disruption to your operations.”

– TechRepublic

Here are some of the things you might want to include in your BCP:

- **Cloud Migration:** Migrating your data to the cloud will help you prepare for a disaster. During an emergency, IT infrastructure might become inoperable, which could impact your business operations. Cloud storage, on the other hand, will let you access data wherever you are in the world. Include details about cloud migration and data protection in your BCP.

- **Antivirus Protection:** Cybercrime is becoming a bigger concern for Florida business owners, and protecting your company against malware and other threats should be a top priority. Include information about antivirus protection in your BCP.
- **Alternative Premises:** If a flood or fire impacts your business premises, you might want to transfer your business operations to an alternative facility. This will help you execute business tasks with minimum downtime.
- **Customer Operations:** Malfunctioning hardware or a cyber attack can result in downtime, which impacts customer operations. To improve the customer experience in the event of an emergency or disaster, think of alternative ways to engage with your customers. Include these details in your BCP.

Don't forget, [a reputable managed services provider in Florida](#) can take care of these tasks for you. This partnership will give you confidence and allow you to focus on other areas of your business.

Related: 3 huge data breaches from the last 12 months

How to optimize your Florida BCP

There are a number of ways you can optimize your BCP for more effective disaster management.

For example, you should distribute your BCP to all members of your staff, so employees know what to do in an emergency. And don't forget to review your BCP on a regular basis, either. Internal and external threats evolve over time, so it's important to update your policies and procedures when you can.



“Technology evolves, and people come and go, so the plan needs to be updated, too,” says CIO. “Bring key personnel together at least annually to review the plan and discuss any areas that must be modified.”

– CIO

You should also list the resources you need in an emergency situation. These might include vital records, inventories, and third-party services. Make sure you can access these resources when your IT infrastructure fails.



“Following an incident that disrupts business operations, resources will be needed to carry out recovery strategies and to restore normal business operations,” says the Department of Homeland Security.

– The Department of Homeland Security

Your BCP will outline recovery strategies to help you deal with a disaster or emergency situation. If you haven’t developed a BCP yet, it could be one of the most important things you do this year.

For more assistance with your BCP and disaster recovery planning, [download our 2018 Hurricane Technology Preparedness Checklist.](#)



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