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Business Continuity Plan Elements

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Over the years, I have assisted several organizations in developing their Business Continuity Programs, more specifically Business Impact Assessments (BIA) and Business Continuity Plans (BCP) for their departments. Developing and completing both BIAs and BCPs is essential to ensure the recoverability of the organizations most critical processes. Below are a some key bits of information that helped ensure success and I hope they are helpful to you as you develop your departmental plans.

Both BIAs and BCPs are interdependent:

- The BIA identifies the department's core business processes, the process' dependencies and what the process supports. For example, the payroll process depends on employee's timesheets and is dependent on the check-printing process.
- The BCP identifies procedures that guide organizations to respond, recover, resume and restore to a pre-defined level of operation following disruption (as defined by [BCI](#)). To develop these procedures, the BCP should be process-centric by focusing on recovering the process identified in the BIA to restore process' full functionality.

Walkthroughs versus testing

- Requiring the payroll department perform a test of the BCP may be beneficial, however more difficult to test the IT dependent steps as well as the printing of

sample paychecks. It may be more effective to coordinate a walk-through of the departments BCP with departments that have (or are) dependent on the process.

- In the example mentioned above, the payroll department would benefit from performing a BCP walkthrough with the participation of the finance and Information Technology department responsible for printing payroll checks.
- Whether a walk-through or actual test, the main objective is to ensure that the department periodically reviews the documented BCP as well as validate the details in the BIA annually at a minimum.

Focusing on the departments most critical processes

Although the BIA includes all departmental processes, primary focus should be to ensure the most critical processes are fully documented. You can identify the most critical processes by establishing a rating system, where the most critical are identified as tier-1 processes and least critical ones are tier-2, tier-3, and so on.

Criticality of a process should be gauged based on the processes most critical to the organization. Partnering with your risk organization may be beneficial as they may have already identified the most critical processes and possibly the most essential departments to the organization.



In any situation, your BIA and BCP process is essential to be completed when standing up your Business Continuity Program and ensuring regular updating and testing. In every situation where I was developing BIAs and BCPs, working closely with all departmental managers and senior executives helped me ensure success.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss similar or differing perspectives on this topic, I welcome your thoughts and input, please message me if you would like to discuss further.