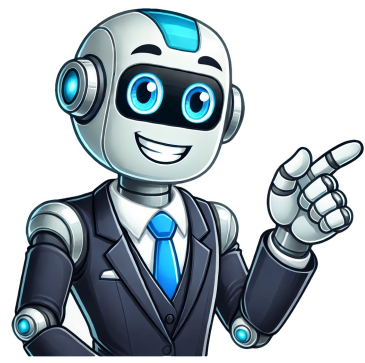


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Life doesn't always go according to plan. Even some of the most experienced business owners can be caught short when they're faced with the unexpected. That's why it's important to have a tried-and-tested plan ready and waiting should the worst happen. Whether it's a heavy snowstorm or a sudden broadband outage, business continuity is about keeping your business up and running when things go wrong. According to the Office for National Statistics, over 10% of UK businesses fail each year. And while there are lots of reasons a business can go under, many fail because they're unable to recover from a single event that suddenly devastates their business. Here, AXA explains more about business continuity planning and you'll find an easy-to-follow checklist and template so you can start thinking about your own plan. What is business continuity planning? Business continuity planning refers to the systems and procedures that allow businesses to maintain or quickly resume functions in the event of a major disruption. Essentially, business continuity is like having a back-up plan. A business continuity plan should outline procedures and instructions for staff members in the event of a disaster. The plan should cover things like: Business processes: What to do with equipment and/or stock Who is responsible for what Emergency contact details Back-up power arrangement Business continuity plans are commonly used when businesses experience disruption during extreme weather. But they also come in handy for day-to-day problems like your customers not paying on time, a staff member being off sick, or a supplier letting you down. Here, AXA shares some tips and advice to get you thinking about what your own business continuity plan might look like. However, when it comes to putting your plan down to paper, we recommend consulting with professional bodies or other experts. The Business Continuity Institute and the ISO Business Continuity Management Systems can help with business continuity planning standards and frameworks. They also provide training and resources (many of which are free) to businesses who need help with continuity planning. Carry out a risk assessment Before writing your business continuity plan, you'll want to carry out a comprehensive risk assessment to identify the areas where your business is more vulnerable. Here's a brief risk assessment checklist with the most common things to consider: Employees Premises Customers Suppliers Business partners Systems and processes Finances Cash flow IT Equipment (e.g. computers, vehicles, tools) Legal compliance Logistics Top tip: Get your staff involved in the risk assessment because they might be able to identify things you're not aware of. AXA offer a range of Risk Management guides which you can access [guides here](#). Write the BCP: what to include For smaller businesses and sole traders, business continuity plans (BCP) don't need to be as complex as the BCPs large corporations have. In your risk assessment, you will have identified several key areas of vulnerability and they'll be the focus of your plan. For example, your key areas might be things like burglary, flooding, fire or a staff member leaving and therefore the main body of your BCP will be made up of checklists in each of these key areas. The checklists will detail different scenarios and explain who's responsible for what and provide timescales for different tasks. A comprehensive contact list of all the important people you might need to speak to in an emergency is an essential part of business continuity planning. This will include key customers and suppliers, staff members, local emergency services and insurance providers. Its good practice to update your BCP contact list regularly. And remember, any personal information about your employees must be kept secure and only shared with those who have a need to know. You'll also want to include an action and expenses logbook which is a great way to understand what worked well and what didn't so you can improve your processes in the future. Equally, it can be a useful tool to document any essential expenses to show your insurance company. Top tip: Write your BCP in plain English so it's easy to understand and everyone knows what's expected of them. Instead of jargon and long-winded explanations, use simple sentences and bullet points. Test and communicate the BCP Good communication is essential when it comes to business continuity. Everyone who works for your business should read and understand the BCP before it's fully implemented. This means you'll have time to plan any additional training the staff might need. To test your BCP, you might want to rehearse your responses to the key areas you identified in your risk assessment. This will give you time to iron out any issues and ensure everyone knows exactly what to do and when. Some businesses choose to send their BCPs to key customers and suppliers so everyone's on the same page. It also means if you do encounter an emergency or disaster, you won't need to waste your time sending it to all the relevant people. Business continuity plan checklist This business continuity plan (BCP) checklist template is a simple outline that you can build on and make specific to your business. When you go to create your own BCP, we recommended consulting with the Business Continuity Institute or other professional bodies. Introduction Key area checklists Contact lists Action and expenses log Business continuity plan example for UK business Introduction The introduction to your business continuity plan will include company information and contact details as well as the overall objectives for the BCP. It might look something like this: Company Name Business Continuity Plan Date Name of person responsible Phone/Email/Address (Include details of a secondary contact in the event of annual leave/sickness.) Objective This Business Continuity Plan has been designed to prepare Company Name to cope with the effects of an emergency. This document will provide instructions so Company Names business functions can be maintained or quickly resumed in the event of a major disruption. Key area checklist For every area of vulnerability you identify in your risk assessment, you should complete a checklist to outline what the response should be. Here's an example of a checklist to give you an idea of what to include: Key area: (e.g. flooding, burglary, cyberattack, staff member leaving) Responsibility (Who is responsible?) Impact (How would this impact the organisation?) Likelihood (How likely is this to impact the organisation?) Timescale (How quickly must this be resolved to avoid lasting damage?) Resource Action Staff List the number of staff, naming specific individuals. Data Process for data backup and recovery. Premises Relocation or working-from-home options. Communication Methods of contacting staff, suppliers and customers. Equipment Process for recovery or replacement of equipment. Supplies/Stock Process for replacing stock and important supplies. Contact lists When you're creating a list of contacts for your BCP, its important to consider who you might need to speak to in an emergency. Most continuity plans have contact details for staff members, suppliers, customers, utility companies, local emergency services and insurance and banking companies. Contact What to include: Staff Name / Job title / Work number / Personal number / Email / Address Suppliers Company name / What they provide / Phone / Email Customers Name / Brief description (e.g. what they buy, how much they spend) / Phone / Email Utilities Company name / Utility / Phone / Email Local emergency services Ambulance, Fire Service, Flood line, NHS Direct, Police Insurance and finance Company name / Service / Phone / Email Action and expenses log When you're dealing with an emergency and following your business continuity plan, its a good idea to document what you're doing and when. Not only will it help you understand what worked and what didn't in your BCP, but it could also act as evidence of the costs incurred during an emergency or for any potential insurance claims. Your logbook might look something like this: Date/Time Action Actioned by Authorised by Costs Insuring your business against interruption or unforeseen events Having business insurance should be an integral part of any business continuity plan. AXAs business insurance gives you protection from everyday business risks to large, unexpected compensation claims. It can protect your work, your people, your reputation, and ultimately, your future livelihood. With AXAs business insurance you can easily combine different covers and choose from a list of add-ons. So you only pay for the cover you need. You'll leave with business insurance unique to your business, no one else's. Click here to find out more about business insurance and how much the level of cover you need might cost. By Tatyana Parham In the midst of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, small businesses around the world are experiencing severe operational and economic challenges. In order to embrace small business recovery in such difficult times, business owners must proactively take the steps necessary to develop resilience in the face of a disaster. By creating a detailed business recovery plan geared towards the impacts of the pandemic, leaders are better equipped to respond efficiently and protect their employees, customers, and operations. What is included in a small business disaster recovery plan? A business recovery plan is a strategic guide that details processes created to prepare, respond, and recover in the event of an emergency. As the COVID-19 pandemic has a unique set of challenges, as compared to other natural disasters such as floods and hurricanes, it calls for a nuanced plan-of-action that will mitigate risks and allow for an expedient recovery. An effective business recovery plan clearly outlines policies and procedures that highlight key information such as disaster risk and impact, critical stakeholders and operations, communication models, and strategy for business continuity. Here are some key concepts to consider when creating a disaster recovery plan for your small business: Prioritize employee health and safety The health, safety, and wellbeing of your employees and customers should always be your top priority. Address any immediate needs and concerns first, including creating guidelines that support sick employees or those with sick family members. Consider expanding flexibility for typical work arrangements, and verify that you have the capacity to support a remote workforce. If telecommuting isn't possible, ensure you have measures established that align with the current governmental health policies and support a safe working environment. Identify COVID-19 risks and impact on your business Conduct a risk assessment: Small business recovery begins with awareness of the potential risks that can adversely affect your business. A part of this may be to consider how operations will change in a worst-case scenario of 35 - 40% of your workforce being out sick, or how to reallocate your budget and preemptively avoid layoffs. Other risks may include lack of access to public transport for employee commute, additional costs of establishing a remote workforce, national shutdowns prohibiting in-person contact, slowdown in sales, issues in supply chain and manufacturing, and even your business being forced to temporarily close. Prioritize critical business functions that are the most vulnerable, such as employee payroll inventory management, and outline how you can protect them. Once top risks are identified, you can assess which risks will generate the most substantial impact, so you can determine the most efficient use of your resources. Analyze the impact: Understand how the identified risks can affect critical business functions, and map out potential impacts this can have on your business. For example, if you have to temporarily stop operations for six weeks, how will that affect your quarterly and yearly financial statements, and how can you minimize financial loss through alternative sources of income? Identify the gaps in your current processes that prevent your business from operating sustainably. This process is called a business impact analysis. Designate a recovery team After identifying your businesss prime vulnerabilities, designate a team of stakeholders that will be directly involved in recovery efforts. This team of key players should understand the businesss core competencies, and have the ability to consistently make choices that reflect the best outcome for the needs of the business. Be realistic about expectations for each individual, and ensure that you are a top leader throughout recovery in order to maintain employee confidence levels. Establish transparent communication Consistently focus on transparent and timely communication with all relevant stakeholders to ensure regular support throughout the pandemic, including employees, clients or customers, suppliers, landlords, and investors. Create an employee communication plan specifically intended for the event of a disaster, and consistently provide updates based on CDC guidelines and organizational priorities. Regularly inform customers of any impact on products, services, and delivery, and maintain steady contact with suppliers regarding their continued capability to provide essential materials. Revise business strategy for continuity As the pandemic progresses, significant shifts in consumer behavior will demand a different approach to sustaining your business. Proactively strategize how to minimize downtime and disruptions to daily operations. Perform a complete audit of your business and marketing plans to pinpoint whats working, whats not working, and what will best support your business in a worst-case scenario. Creatively decide on a plan-of-action that will provide practical cost-effective strategies that reduce the impact of identified risks. Brainstorm how to protect cash flow and monitor utilization of resources, ensuring that you have more than enough to cover future expenses. Continue to monitor external vulnerabilities that can impact the flow of business as well, including pressures on customers, partners, and suppliers. Devise multiple plans for multiple scenarios of varying intensity, to ensure full preparation for whats ahead. Assess your wins and losses throughout the recovery process, and devise contingency plans that will enable your business to thrive moving forward. Although crises may have considerable impacts to the detriment of your business, they reveal opportunities for your business to generally improve in value, organization, or efficiency. Maximize the use of alternative funding and support To support business recovery, stay up to date with available local and federal assistance programs that offer disaster relief. Visit our online hub for COVID-19 resources here. A recovery plan will help you respond effectively if an incident or crisis affects your business. It aims to shorten your recovery time and minimise losses. Business recovery is the return to operations following an incident, crisis, disaster, or significant event. A business recovery plan is a pre-designed plan that includes: setting timelines to restore critical functions strategies to trade at pre-incident levels as soon as possible Your recovery plan is part of your business continuity plan that outlines practical strategies to help you manage and stage a recovery from a crisis. This template includes a Recovery section. Use this page to consider how your business can recover from a crisis, then complete the recovery section of the template. Download the business continuity planning template. In some cases, such as a pandemic, there may be several steps and stages of recovery. For example, a lockdown may occur several times and the business will need to recover operations as quickly as possible after each event. Unlike an incident response plan, the business recovery plan has a longer-term view. The business recovery plan covers: strategies to recover from a range of incidents objectives around time-frames to fully recover all business functions a description of key resources, equipment, and staff required checklists to ensure all actions have been done. The best method to help define recovery times is to conduct a business impact analysis and identify critical business activities. Find out more about identifying and managing risk. Analyse how long it will take to bring each activity back online or make operational again, for example, restoring backups of critical IT systems on your computers or replacing lost stock. Capture this in the recovery section of your business continuity plan. Natural disasters: cyclones severe storm flood bush fire drought Major health event: pandemic epidemics localised outbreaks food poisoning and contamination Emergency: biosecurity threats (pest and animal disease outbreaks) workplace accidents or deaths dangerous material spills, leaks, or explosions loss of power or infrastructure major transport disaster terrorist or major criminal incidents climate change risks Informing technology (IT) threat: cyber-attack or data hacking IT failure Reputation incident: highly negative media or social media coverage rumour-driven crisis inappropriate workplace behaviour (e.g. bullying, harassment) organisational misdeeds and legal action (e.g. fraud, theft) As with the incident response plan, consider a team to manage business recovery. Your team may be internal, such as the leader with clear objectives for all critical business functions, or external with advice and support from your accountant, legal representative, or business mentor. As part of the planning, your team should receive training or advice on incident recovery and any designated tasks. This training could include skills to run the recovery remotely and the use of your emergency kits. Clarification about who is needed for the recovery team, team training and practice drills are important parts of your preparation. Past disasters and other incidents show that small businesses often need and look for external help to aid internal staff with full recovery (e.g. emergency services, banking and finance operators, council, and government assistance) recover in different ways and at different speeds (e.g. external mental health services may form part of your recovery plan) can struggle to make important decisions for many months (i.e. being without a clear recovery plan with achievable actions will slow down progress). Your team should know about employment requirements and obligations before, during and after an incident or event. Learn more about employment entitlements during natural disasters and emergencies from the Fair Work Ombudsman. The recovery team should communicate as soon as possible with all staff and key stakeholders usually within the first 2448 hours of the incident. As the recovery commences and well after the event, it is important to communicate regularly with suppliers, customers, and internal staff. You should provide the current state of progress and any changes that you've implemented to restore operations (e.g. establishing contracts with alternative suppliers or changes to opening hours). Stages of recovery Business recovery after an incident may occur in stages. Initial stage Activities in the initial stage include: returning to your business site only when safe protecting yourself and your staff when returning to the site staying alert to dangers if the emergency event is not yet resolved monitoring emergency updates and broadcasts working with insurance companies to assist in recovery securing the business site if necessary and safe to do so. Early stage Activities in the early stage include: working with professional advisers (e.g. accountant, business mentors to design financial recovery and approach banking or other financial support to maintain cash flow whilst recovering) forecasting cash flow over a prolonged period (e.g. 336 months) insurance rectifications to premises and equipment relocation or 'building back better'. Long-term stage Activities in the long-term stage include: re-negotiating loans reviewing emergency plans and kits new products and services thanking customers, community and celebrating overcoming the incident with staff.

Business recovery plan example. How to write a business continuity and disaster recovery plan. Recovery business example. What is a business recovery plan.