

## Ten Tips to Building an Effective Business Continuity Program

By Alexandre Guindani, CBCP, SBCI, Business Continuity Manager,  
Caixa Econômica Federal, Aguas Claras, Brazil

Many people believe that the creation of a business continuity structure itself provides security to the enterprise and makes it safe from interruption, bringing the feeling of task accomplished.

Unfortunately, business continuity is not a mere project; it must be seen as a state of mind. Business continuity, to be truly effective, requires cultural change.

Also, to be honest, business continuity is not fascinating, nor does it excite or engage people. And this, in my understanding, is the greatest challenge of the professionals dedicated to this subject: to make everyone take part and get deeply involved within the activities that turn a business continuity plan (BCP) into something more than just a bunch of paper.

It's a long stony path, but some principles are basic to all those who fly the business continuity flag. Below are the ones I find most important:

**1. Do not believe blindly in business continuity management (BCM).** Many organizations

believe that it should be enough to have a BCM structure. BCM and all its plans are useful only with adequate updating, exercising and training.

**2. Do not restrict the scope of a BCP.** An incomplete plan will not meet all the needs for business process recovery. The plans need to cover processes, systems, information, infrastructure, and key-people replacement, if necessary.

**3. Prioritize whatever is critical.** It is necessary to prioritize critical business processes. The prioritization of non-vital processes jeopardizes business survival.

**4. Update and test plans.** Plan should be updated and tested regularly, especially when there are changes in business processes or important systems.

**5. Have the support of upper management.** Someone must administrate, set priorities, and organize the BCM, always with support from the C-level (highest ranking executives). This is a key point for success.

**6. Communicate with others.** It is necessary to create a perma-

nent communication channel with all enterprise sectors.

**7. Do not forget about the backup.** It is necessary to keep backups of all vital registries stored in an alternative site away from the main working building.

**8. Be transparent in your actions.** It is necessary to communicate to all stakeholders what is being implemented concerning business continuity.

**9. Properly assess your supply chain.** Many enterprises do not evaluate how much they depend on outsourced services, when interruption in those services might cause catastrophic effects.

**10. Get the business sector engaged.** Responsibility for business continuity is not limited to information and communications technology (ICT). All of an enterprise's business processes must get involved in business continuity management activities.

### Impact on Health Departments

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- Mosquito Control
- Animal Sheltering Issues
- People Sheltering Issues
- Infection Control Management
- After-Action Meetings
- Plan Reviews

Public Health did 400 restaurant visits within the first 72 hours, recording 435 total environmental mutual aid hours (not counting tetanus shots).

This disaster was significant to me because I was personally

impacted. Being a first responder and being impacted by the disaster presented a big challenge for me. Communications and travel were a mess, and trying to contact anyone in the city chain-of-command was almost impossible. My 15-year-old son and I went house-to-house shutting off the gas and doing search-and-rescue and medical aid. My daughter (a Joplin Police Department dispatcher) was able to text us, and we were able to communicate with other people via text. After a couple of days of home repairs and tarping, I went back to work at the Health Department with a new perspective.



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