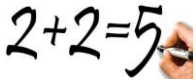


Common Mistakes when Creating a Business Continuity Plan (BCP): An Essential Guide for Organisations



Creating a Business Continuity Plan can sometimes seem like a huge task to undertake but avoiding common mistakes will certainly make your life easier.

Here is a practical breakdown of the common mistakes organisations make when creating a BCP and how you can avoid them:

1. Focussing Only on IT Recovery

Mistake: Many organisations confuse BCP with just disaster recovery for IT systems

How to Avoid:

- Take a holistic view and make sure that you include all business critical functions, such as but not limited to, operations, facilities, financial, supply chain, service providers, communications, HR etc.
- Conduct a Business Impact Analysis (BIA) to identify key processes beyond IT

2. Lack of Senior Management Involvement

Mistake: Leaving BCP development entirely to middle / operational management or technical teams without executive support

How to Avoid:

- Secure visible commitment from Senior Leadership
- Involve executives in key decisions and testing exercises. Their buy in ensures resources and authority for effective implementation

3. Failing to Involve All Departments

Mistake: Only one department (often only IT or Risk) develops the plan without cross functional input

How to Avoid:

- Form a cross functional BCP team with representatives from all key departments
- Ensure each department understands its role and contributes to the plan

4. Outdated or Static Plans

Mistake: Creating the plan once and storing it away without regular reviews or updates

How to Avoid:

- Schedule regular reviews of at least annually, or whenever there are significant organisational changes
- Update the plan to reflect new technologies, processes, staff, suppliers and risks

5. Ignoring Supply Chain Risks

Mistake: Overlooking 3rd party dependencies and external vendors in Planning

How to Avoid:

- Identify critical suppliers and assess their continuity capabilities
- Include contingency plans for supply chain disruptions

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6. Overcomplicating the Plan

Mistake: Producing a lengthy, complex document that is hard to understand or follow in a crisis

How to Avoid:

- Keep the plan practical and user friendly with clear, concise steps
- Use checklists, flowcharts, and quick reference guides for easy access during emergencies

7. Inadequate Testing and Training

Mistake: Not testing the plan or providing sufficient staff training

How to Avoid:

- Conduct regular testing (table-top exercises, simulations, recovery drills)
- Provide role specific training so employees know what to do under stress

8. Poor Communication Planning

Mistake: Neglecting clear communication protocols for internal teams, customers, suppliers and the public

How to Avoid:

- Develop a crisis communication plan
- Identify spokesperson/s and pre-approved messaging for different scenarios

9. Understanding the Human Factor

Mistake: Failing to consider employee well-being, stress and personal challenges during disruption

How to Avoid:

- Include provisions for employee support, remote working options, and mental health resources
- Emphasise clear compassionate communication during crises

10. Assuming “It Won’t Happen to Us”

Mistake: Believing major disruptions are unlikely and treating the BCP as a low priority

How to Avoid:

- Shift the mindset from ‘if’ to when’
- Highlight real world examples relevant to your organisation or sector to emphasise the importance of preparedness

Final Tip:

A BCP is only effective if it is realistic, well understood, and practiced. Viewing it as an ongoing process and not a one-time project, is the best way to avoid these common mistakes