

ICM *more continuity*

Where to start with Business Continuity?

Delivering business availability **110%**



ICM **ore protection**

A good place to begin would be to clarify exactly what you understand by the term 'business continuity'.

Although it has its origins in computer disaster recovery, Business Continuity Management (BCM) now covers a much broader range of business risks and is about protecting all of your organisation's critical processes - whatever the cause of the disruption.

In the event of any serious interruption to your business, your BCM policies will ensure that your critical business processes can resume as quickly as possible. In short, it will help to ensure your business survives the disruption.

At this early stage, ICM can support your BCM development by helping you educate and build an effective internal team to implement your business continuity strategy. ICM works in partnership with you to achieve success, providing all the local expertise and resources you may need, in order to ensure that the plan is understood and implemented throughout your organisation.

Furthermore, by working with leading industry bodies such as the Continuity Forum, Business Continuity Institute (BCI) and SURVIVE!, ICM ensures that its approach always meets the very latest independent standards.

Why do we need a business continuity plan?

In light of recent world events, organisations are more aware of external hazards and threats and the need to protect themselves. In addition to well publicised widespread threats such as terrorism, businesses are more likely to be exposed to local disasters, which can be just as debilitating such as fire, power and communications failure, flood, theft, computer viruses or IT hardware failure. These problems actually cost businesses billions each year and should be the first focus, but organisations should not ignore the larger issues outside of their control and it is important to maintain awareness.

The Civil Contingencies Act, revised Companies Act and the FSA (Financial Services Authority) require organisations to implement a business continuity plan by law or regulation. As a result, BCM is increasingly understood to be best practice and a pre-requisite of doing business.

Notwithstanding, implementing a business continuity plan will help protect your customers, staff, investors and other stakeholders against unexpected incidents and could ultimately keep you in business.



Can we take care of it internally?

It is essential that a business takes ownership and contributes to the formulation of a plan. Equally though, ICM's experience of more than a decade of planning and actual recovery brings significant knowledge, proven approaches and procedures to help organisations quickly achieve an effective plan.

Once a plan is in place, it is possible for an organisation to implement their own business continuity solution. However it may not be as robust or multi-faceted as that supplied by an experienced provider.

To ensure total continuity in the event of a disaster, you would need to consider an alternative place of work - a replica of your office(s). The associated costs and overheads of maintaining a standby building and data centre could be extortionate to manage.

ICM has 12 workplace and IT recovery centres strategically placed regionally throughout the UK available for your business. All of our centres are within a 1 hour drive time of the local business community, which means your staff do not need to commute far to use one of our centres. Centres can be accessed within 2 to 4 hours with many clients being customer facing within a 4 to 8 hour window even following a total loss incident.

ICM bears the full cost of keeping all the centres operational and equipped with the latest PC, server and communications technology. As the services are syndicated to a limited number of other organisations requiring similar support, you are able to benefit from the most modern standby working environment, without shouldering the cost of ownership.

ICM **More coordination**

1. Engage senior management

ICM can help senior management identify the key corporate risks that could arise from an unplanned interruption.

This means that important strategic issues, such as loss of reputation, are specifically addressed and corporate priorities identified.

It is crucial to ensure that there is senior management support before initiating a process. By getting BCM on the board's agenda and keeping it there, you will ensure the process is far less likely to stall at key points.

In some regulated industries, such as Financial Services, board-level ownership and accountability is mandatory by government legislation and stakeholder responsibility.

You may find the board are unaware of these obligations and bringing it to their attention may be a fundamental part of the process.

2. Establish the reasons behind your BCM arrangements

You should define clearly why you are developing a BCM strategy.

Is it to:

- **Protect profit margins?**
- **Safeguard customer/supplier relationships?**
- **Maintain your position in the industry?**
- **Meet legislation or regulatory requirements?**



ICM *More insight*

3. Calculate the cost of a serious disruption to your operations

From a financial perspective, you should identify how long you can survive after a disruption before the organisation needs to return to normal operations. This will influence how seriously senior management are committed to the BCM process, as it will give them a clear understanding of the financial implications of an unexpected disruption to the business.

Managers should provide input to this process, but only senior management should have the authority to determine acceptable levels of disruption to the business and associate expertise to protect it.

By working closely with your organisation, ICM can assist your operational management to determine what threats exist and how they would affect critical processes and functions.



4. Keep it as simple as possible

If a BCM approach varies too much from standard day to day procedures, it is far less likely to work when it comes to an invocation. This is especially true when writing plans. A common error is to include tasks for a recovery process which are not actually relevant to the department's normal working practice.

ICM's professional team of specialists can help you identify which tasks are important to include in the business continuity process and ensure that they are a part of your plan.

Scenario 1 - A theft of 60 PCs occurred at a southern NHS trust

When a Southern NHS Trust became the victim of a burglary in which all 60 PCs were stolen overnight, it could have had a devastating impact on the organisation. Fortunately, these clients had signed up with ICM for relocatable IT recovery.

This meant that their software was swiftly loaded onto the temporary PCs and operations were restored to the original capabilities using the replacement units shipped from ICM within a matter of hours.

ICM **ore commitment**

5. Make business continuity a constantly evolving element of your business culture, not simply an IT matter

Business continuity is not just about creating a plan. Progressing and taking ownership are also important stages. In reality, the process is an essential function that affects an entire organisation across all departments, and must be viewed as such. Your planning must be grounded in reality and not abstract or theory.

ICM's highly skilled consultants and technical support team are available to support you in managing either short or long term business continuity projects, helping you as a Business Continuity Manager to communicate your plan and achieve full buy-in from your organisation.

Where your business continuity arrangements rely on IT or other technical facilities such as telecommunications, our extensive IT capabilities mean we can provide your organisation with the solutions you need.

Scenario 2 - A call centre is accidentally 'disconnected' by a cable tunnel fire

The call centre urgently needed an office with 100 seats to continue to receive customer calls and maintain business operations. All their phone lines were affected by the fire, which meant they could not operate the business from their own premises.

As a subscribing client, the call centre was up and running in an ICM recovery centre within 4 hours and operations continued as normal for 1 week until repairs were completed.



ICM *ore experience*

6. Document, test, review, improve... and then do it all over again

Business continuity is a living, ongoing process that is only as effective as the last time it was reviewed and executed.

Don't let your first test be a real incident; make the time and circumstances a choice not a response. You should test your plan at least once a year, sometimes more often depending on the size, geographical locations and unique circumstances of your organisation. You can start out simply with desktop walkthroughs, telephone cascade checks and build up to cross business exercises. And when you feel confident enough, you can try unannounced full recovery scenarios.

Each ICM business recovery service agreement includes regular rehearsals on a planned basis. This enables you to work with our technical consultants and support staff to ensure that your business continuity cover will be effective in the event of an invocation.

You may also require additional support, for example, with the development of a systems recovery script procedure, or in the management and planning of recovery trials. ICM can provide the resources and specialist expertise required under a managed services agreement.

Each of ICM's regional recovery centres are prepared and fully equipped ready for invocation and testing 24x7x365.



Scenario 3 - A manufacturer opens up on Monday and discovers a power loss to its computer room

A large quantity of orders needed to be processed and distributed on this busy Monday morning. However, no orders could be administered without access to the computerised order system.

ICM had organised a mobile IT recovery plan with the manufacturer 9 months previously when they expressed concerns that their operations would not be able to continue if there was a disruption to their network.

On Monday morning, the manufacturer invoked their plan. Within 4 hours, ICM delivered a 40ft independent mobile datacentre, configured to match the customer's systems and business operations resumed within the working day.

ICM *ore connection*

ICM's consultants will provide ongoing assistance from managing the overall BCM establishment process to reviewing, auditing and reporting the BCM approach, to developing skills in your key staff

The specialised nature of business continuity projects means that many organisations need to utilise the skills and experience of a dedicated BC consultant to ensure that business continuity arrangements are rapidly established that are appropriate, comprehensive, cost effective and practical.

Many organisations will find it is simply not economically viable to employ an internal full-time BC consultant to establish BCM, and will look to utilise an external consultant to fulfil this role. This is particularly true where, as is often the case, senior management are looking to get appropriate arrangements in place quickly.

Scenario 4 - A major UK high street retailer loses its centralised IT datacentre

The retailer has a UK wide network of high street and out of town shops. All stock, EPOS, staff management and email are delivered over network links from a centralised data centre, which was impacted by a UPS failure on a Friday night just before a summer bank holiday weekend.

ICM had identified that the centralised datacentre was a single point of failure for the customer's entire retail business activities and they risked losing tens of thousands of pounds per hour of downtime. ICM proposed a high availability solution using its local datacentre to replicate the client's critical applications, including email.

Following the failure, the client switched its retail data network to ICM's facility using a burstable fail-over ATM link back into their communication provider's network.

By 9.00 am on Saturday the shops were open for trading, with access to the latest stock and financial information and continuing to use the fail-over facility over the bank holiday weekend.



ICM *More action*

Taking the next step

The advice given in this document is designed as an introduction to business continuity management and planning, and you should not treat it as a definitive guide. If you have read up to this point, it shows you have a real interest in creating a valuable level of security and protection for your organisation.

Business continuity is not simple, but neither is it impossible. If approached in the right way and with the right support and experience provided by ICM, it can be achieved efficiently and effectively at a lower cost than you might think. If you'd like to discuss the issues raised here, we would be delighted to explain more about our approach to business continuity.

Our extensive experience ranges from gaining senior management support and involvement through to helping operational management to develop working, tested and proven business continuity arrangements, as well as providing ongoing support and management of business continuity projects and strategies. ICM's specialist team incorporates significant business management experience in addition to a wide technical knowledge base.

Our team is available to tell you about the resources within ICM to help you secure your organisation.

**If you would like to discuss your business continuity needs,
please contact us via one of the following methods:**

www.icmore.co.uk/bc

enquiry line: 08701 22 22 00

email: icmore@icm-computer.co.uk

ICM Computer Group, ICM House, Oakwell Way, Oakwell Park,
Birstall, West Yorkshire, WF17 9LU Tel: 0870 121 8300

To help ICM understand your business continuity needs, be prepared to answer the following questions:

- How many employees are within your organisation?
- How many operate from your head office; do you have any other large locations in the UK?
- Do you have a call centre or a major reliance on client contact by telephone?
- Do you operate your own IT systems or are they outsourced?
- What reliance do you have on the Internet, email and external data links?



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