

Top 10 tips for small business...

How to get ready for swine flu, floods, power outages and IT issues!

Are you a law firm, consultancy, local council, accountants' firm, manufacturer or other small or medium-sized organisation (SME)? Have your customers or regulators asked you yet for your Business Continuity Plan (BCP) or Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP)? If not - they will soon!

The top 10 tips for small business operators, to assist with preparing for pandemic flu, IT outages, public transport disruption, denial of access to premises and other disaster scenarios...



What if your business
got turned upside down?

- 1) Have 'dual supplier' arrangements and/or manual workarounds in place for every critical activity.
- 2) Make all contact details available - including internal (staff, shareholders) and external (supplier, customer, media, next-of-kin) details, and make sure they are accessible from various sources (web, phone, hard copy, USB).
- 3) Know who in your business will make key decisions when an incident occurs. Be as efficient as possible in your crisis response, and have the courage to act 'outside the square' and completely change your business direction if need be.
- 4) Be proactive in your notification of customers, the community and the press... don't wait for them to ring up and find out your business is no longer in normal operation.
- 5) Know what your key time-critical functions/services/activities are, and make plans to focus firstly on those in case of a disaster.
- 6) Make plans for your staff to work from home - or alternate sites. Use a virtual/shared office as an affordable continuity solution if need be – or set-up a reciprocal arrangement with a business that has similar requirements to yours.
- 7) Ensure your employees are able to perform several roles in case of illness/resignation (job rotation in preparation for this can be great for company culture too!).
- 8) Ensure you are able to divert services remotely (including IT, telephone, supplier deliveries etc) and make sure you always have the necessary passwords and contact details available.
- 9) On the preventative side: Understand and mitigate your security weaknesses (e.g. theft of your mail server) and have proper hygiene and infection management procedures in place (e.g. in relation to a flu outbreak).
- 10) Take out insurance relevant to your business - including 'key person' insurance and business interruption insurance.

Using a smart best-practice template for your Business Continuity Plan (BCP) will save you weeks of preparation. Check out <http://www.disasterplantemplate.com> to receive further information.