

Proactive Business Recovery Planning--Start the Process Now!

By Tim Cook, R.DORSEY+COMPANY

Our world is in a constant state of change and motion – the weather changes, the economy changes, our competitors change, our markets change, our technologies change.

We often find ourselves wondering what would happen if too many of these changes occur at the same time. How ready would our business be if something were to go wrong – a loss of power, a virus or hacker attack, a physical or technical disaster? Could our business recover?

Frequently we don't even ask these questions that a business recovery plan answers. A Business Recovery Plan is a tool that helps us better manage business risks, just like financial plans and audits.

Some startling realities:

- The U.S. Department of Labor states that 93% of companies suffering data loss are out of business in 5 years.
- A study conducted by the University of Wisconsin finds that 43% of U.S. businesses will not re-open after a disaster; 23% of those that do will close within 2 years.
- The Carnegie Mellon Software Engineering Institute reports that 99% of all [technology security] intrusions were preventable using available mitigations and counter measures.

Business recovery is a complex process that is dependent on the ability and capability of the business to resume its operations after either an anticipated or unanticipated event.

Would your business recover?

Do you have your Business Recovery Plan in place?

Ponder Points

- Is my data safe and recoverable?
- Exactly where are my network security vulnerabilities?
- What levels of business risk are acceptable?
- Is my "recovery readiness" team in place, trained, and proactive?
- How can my trusted advisors help me drive business recovery plans and readiness?
 - Accountant
 - Banker
 - Attorney
 - Technology
 - Insurance

- Vendors
- How can we leverage ongoing business activities and/or events?
- Where will we be one year from today in terms of readiness?

If you don't know the answers to these questions, and have them documented in a format that any member of your team could pick up and execute, the time to start is now.

The process of developing a Business Recovery Plan is just that, a process. It is something that can be built starting TODAY.

- As you are working with vendors – purchasing new hardware and software systems – ask them what their plan for Business Recovery is and how they would support you in the event of a disaster. Get their answer in writing and you're on your way.
- Are you completing regular back-ups of your network data? Validate that the tapes are capturing the data correctly and completely and that you can in fact restore vital data.
- Assign recovery plan components to different individuals and set deadlines. Business recovery isn't simply a matter of technology or accounting data, it is about the entire business and should include:
 - People
 - Facilities
 - Data
 - Processes
 - Systems
 - Networks
- Gain executive sponsorship for your business recovery planning process – find a champion for the cause.

Creating a Business Recovery Plan isn't a single event. It is a proactive process that needs to be updated, reviewed, and tested on an ongoing basis.

R.DORSEY+COMPANY is a trusted technology advisor on business recovery planning, disaster recovery for technology, and security vulnerability testing. Their enterprise infrastructure expertise helps them put your business recovery efforts on the proactive track. "I sleep a little better at night now," one of their clients confided after they made technology changes significantly reducing the business risks identified during their proactive planning effort.

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