

## WHAT IS A BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN?

*At it's most basic definition, a business continuity plan is a written document that businesses can use to ensure that their business systems and processes continue functioning during an emergency or disaster.*



**As a business owner, you need to be prepared for it all.**

**How long would your business survive if you could not answer your phones, or could not process customer payments?**

Defining a business continuity plan isn't simple. Business continuity varies from business to business, and each plan is unique. Depending on how your business operates, you may think about it a lot differently than another business owner. At it's most basic definition, a business continuity plan is a written document that business can use to ensure that their business systems and processes continue functioning during an emergency or disaster. Of course, even emergencies and disasters have thousands of definitions. These could be natural disasters like floods, fires, or a blackout. They could be internal disasters like a human error, an employee with a family emergency, or an angry employee. As a

business owner, you need to be prepared for all of it.

### **Business Impact Analysis**

First things first - make a list of everything that needs to continue happening during an emergency to keep your business running. What's most important? What could wait for later? How long would your business survive if you couldn't get your product to the customer, couldn't answer your phones, or couldn't process customer payments? Use a Business Impact Analysis to plot out which business processes are most important, and the amount of impact they will have on your company or your customers should

the processes stop.

### **Risk Analysis**

Have your managed service provider or an unbiased third party perform a risk analysis of your company. This will identify any vulnerabilities in your systems and processes that could leave your business susceptible to outside threats such as viruses and hacking. This is typically a relatively painless practice, and shouldn't take more than a day to complete.

### **Acceptable Downtime**

Once you've got your list of business processes ranging from most time-sensitive to least, you'll need to jot down the number minutes, hours,

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or days these processes can be put on hold before they start to critically damage your business. If you can only have your computers down for an hour, but could maybe survive without your phones for a day, note that down. This will help you later on with your step-by-step plan to get your business back on its feet.

### Disaster Recovery

As a central part of your business continuity plan, you must develop a disaster recovery plan. This plan will specifically define the required restoration time of those time-sensitive business processes you listed in the above step.

### Put Together Your Plan

At the very top of your business continuity plan should be contact information for emergency responders, the leadership team, and your managed service provider or IT staff. Make a list of all the vital equipment that may need to be checked/fixed, and where your company keeps their backup devices. Next, list out each and every single step that needs to take place during each phase of an emergency. Make sure to note who is responsible for each step, as well.

### Test Your Plan

A business continuity plan won't benefit you in the slightest if it remains stagnant. Test your plan often, get your employees involved, and work out the kinks. You'll be thankful you did when a disaster strikes and your employees are prepared.

Remember, a business continuity plan should be discussed with your insurance agency and managed service provider. They will be able to help you create a document that you can rely on to get you through a disaster.



Disaster can strike  
at any time.

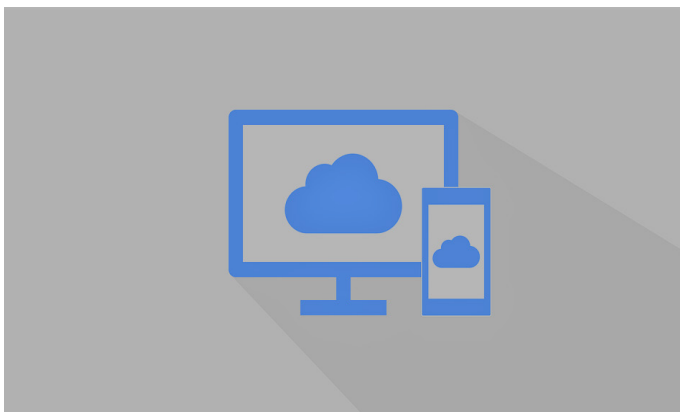
## DO THESE THINGS TO KEEP YOUR BEST EMPLOYEES FROM LEAVING

According to the Gallup's 2017 "State of the American Workplace" report, 51% of currently employed adults in the U.S. are on the hunt for a new job, using company time to search far and wide for a better opportunity. How can you prevent this trend from forcing your best people out of your company?

First, you should give the best people in your organization abundant opportunities to move around and apply their strengths where they're best suited. This means new job roles in addition to lateral growth. Every step of the way, you should be having conversations about their personal and professional development, convincing them to grow with you, instead of outgrowing you.

One great way to "re-recruit" your employees is to conduct regular "stay interview" questions. What do they like about their job? What don't they like? What are they passionate about doing?

But none of this will matter if you don't recognize your top performers. Learn how your team likes to be recognized and cater to their needs. Everybody wants to feel appreciated. Inc.com Jan. 22, 2018



## PREFERRED IT SECURITY SPOTLIGHT

### How Your Company's Data Is Silently Being Leaked Online

There's a growing trend creeping into organizations of all industries and sizes: Shadow IT. Shadow IT are unauthorized cloud applications employees are using and downloading to perform work related activities with company data. This can be file-sharing services like Dropbox or surveys such as Zoomerang. The list goes on and on.

So what's the problem? For starters, if you're in a highly regulated industry like medical or financial services, you're almost guaranteed to be flagrantly violating data privacy laws or at least flirting with them; and if you're audited, you could end up facing BIG fines, not to mention legal fees and bad PR. Second, the barrier to entry is LOW. Anyone with a browser and a credit card can purchase or enroll themselves into applications that integrate with your organization's critical applications and/or store company data such as client lists, e-mails, files, etc.

Your IT company or person should be constantly monitoring your network for new and unknown software or devices. This can (and should!) be incorporated into routine vulnerability testing. If you're not sure this is being done now, find out.

Once you know what applications are being used, you can set your company firewall to block applications you DON'T want employees to access with company data and devices, and allow those that are company-approved.

Don't put yourself at risk!

## Free Guide: What Every Small-Business Owner Must Know About Protecting And Preserving Their Company's Critical Data And Computer Systems

This report will outline in plain nontechnical English common mistakes that many small-business owners make with their computer networks that cost them thousands in lost sales, productivity and computer repair bills, as well as providing an easy, proven way to reduce or completely eliminate the financial expense and frustration caused by these oversights.

Download your FREE copy today at <http://www.preferreditgroup.com/protect> or call our office at 260-440-7377.

### PROTECT YOUR NETWORK

"What Every Business  
Owner Must Know About  
Protecting and  
Preserving Their  
Network"



Don't Trust Your Company's  
Critical Data And  
Operations To Just Anyone!

## OUR COMMUNITY

It's that time of year again! Our Charity Golf and Poker Event to benefit the local Children's Sanctuary is on May 5th - 6th.

Every year, we host a charity poker game with a silent auction of some pretty awesome items. This year, we've added a golf tournament, too!

Last year, we raised over \$5,000 for local foster children and their families. We want to do even better this year.

Ticket sales are now OPEN!

Visit the website below for more info.  
[preferreditgroup.com/charity](http://preferreditgroup.com/charity)

Give Courtney at our office a call if you'd like to donate to our event.



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