

Six Tips for Disaster Preparation

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Validate your Data Backup Plan

Verify your data is out of harm's way and/or is accessible to your recovery location. Consider using a "cloud" service to store key data and allow your organization more flexibility in responding to changing conditions with minimal business interruption.

Consider Employees and the Personal Impact of a Disaster

A company's most important asset is their people - the most important asset for people is their family. Consider how you would move your people and their families if required, think about providing financial support to your employees during a crisis event, and consider offering counseling to help them deal with the aftermath of the crisis.

Develop Various Ways to Communicate with Employees and Partners

After people, the next most important element is communication. Communications efforts must be timely, clear and honest, as miscommunication can make a disaster even worse. Consider how you would communicate with your employees, partners, clients, media, industry, and vice versa. What training have you have provided, what tools are you using? It is VERY important to test the communications plan.

Think About the 'Domino Effect' When Considering Business Risk

Years of experience monitoring regional disasters has shown that these events often create other events. For example, a hurricane normally has high winds and heavy rains that can lead to flooding, structural damage, power outage, telecommunication and/or travel disruptions. Does your plan include contingencies for these sorts of "secondary" events?

Plan for Catastrophic Events that Could Last Awhile

For example, businesses must consider the impact if the duration of the disruption to the facility, network, technology, or people is longer than a period of three days, one week, etc. Over the past decade, we have seen more devastating disaster events with a longer-term duration and financial impact. Companies need to consider their options if their primary environment or key people are not available for more than two weeks.

Think Broadly

Each company is part of a supply chain or network. While you may do everything right, if you have a critical partner, supplier, vendor or provider of service, your preparedness is only as good as the weakest link in that chain. As part of your disaster recovery plan, ensure everyone upstream and downstream from your business is also prepared.