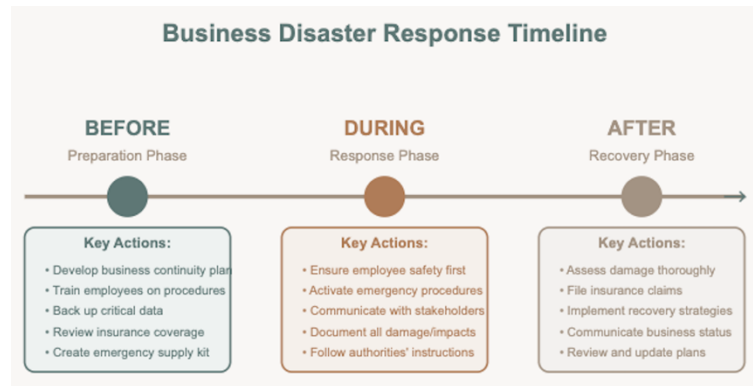


# Business Continuity Management: Preparing Your Business for the Unexpected

## Introduction

One Thirty Nine Consulting is pleased to present this briefing on Business Continuity Management for members of the Fauquier Chamber of Commerce. In our community, businesses face unique challenges when confronted with unexpected disruptions—from natural events to infrastructure failures to supply chain issues.



Even brief interruptions can have significant financial implications for small and mid-sized businesses. Studies show that businesses with proper continuity plans recover more quickly and suffer less financial impact than those without preparation. This briefing aims to provide practical guidance on developing and implementing a business continuity plan that can help your business remain resilient through challenging circumstances and recover quickly when disruptions occur.

## What is Business Continuity Management?

Business continuity management is a proactive approach that helps businesses identify potential threats to their operations and build effective responses to protect their interests, reputation, and revenue streams during disruptions. It involves planning for emergencies, establishing backup procedures, and creating recovery strategies to minimize downtime.

These plans don't need to be complex or expensive to implement for small and mid-sized businesses in our community. Even basic preparation can make the difference between a business that recovers and one that closes permanently.



## The Business Case for Continuity Planning

Research consistently shows that businesses with continuity plans recover more quickly and with less financial impact than those without. According to FEMA, approximately 40% of all businesses never reopen after a disaster, and an additional 25% fail within one year. The Small Business Administration (SBA) estimates that up to 90% of small businesses never reopen after being struck by a significant disruption. However, businesses with continuity plans in place are significantly more likely to survive.



For our local business community, the benefits of business continuity planning include:

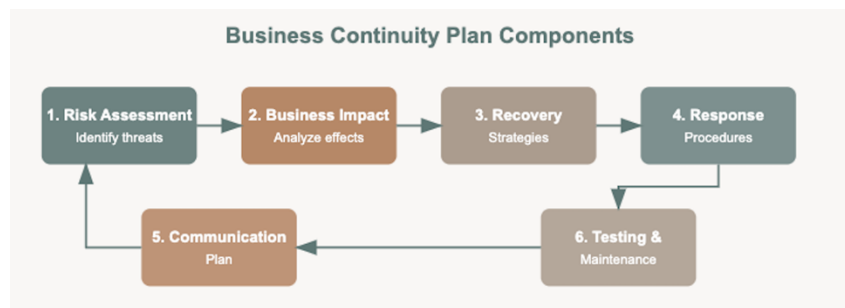
- **Operational resilience:** Maintain essential functions during disruption
- **Financial protection:** Minimize revenue loss and unexpected expenses
- **Customer retention:** Continue serving customers even during challenging times
- **Competitive advantage:** Demonstrate reliability to customers and suppliers
- **Employee security:** Protect jobs and provide clear guidance during emergencies
- **Insurance advantages:** Potentially qualify for premium reductions or better coverage
- **Community support:** Contribute to the overall resilience of our local economy

## Components of an Effective Business Continuity Plan

### 1. Risk Assessment

Start by identifying the specific risks your business might face:

- Natural disasters (floods, wildfires, severe storms)
- Infrastructure failures (power outages, water main breaks, natural gas leaks)
- Supply chain disruptions
- Technology failures or cybersecurity incidents
- Public health emergencies
- Building emergencies (fire, structural damage)



## 2. Business Impact Analysis

Determine how these risks could affect your critical operations:

- Identify your most essential business functions
- Calculate the potential financial impact of disruptions
- Establish recovery time objectives for each critical function
- Document key resources these functions depend on (people, technology, equipment, supplies)

## 3. Recovery Strategies

Develop specific plans to maintain or quickly restore critical functions:

- Alternative work arrangements (remote work options, temporary locations)
- Backup equipment and technology solutions
- Alternative suppliers and service providers
- Cross-training employees on essential functions
- Data backup and recovery procedures

## 4. Emergency Response Procedures

Create clear protocols for immediate response to emergencies:

- Evacuation procedures and meeting points
- Emergency contact lists and communication systems
- Roles and responsibilities during an emergency
- First aid and safety equipment locations
- Procedures for securing facilities and assets

## 5. Communication Plan

Establish how you'll communicate during an emergency:

- Internal communication with employees
- External communication with customers, suppliers, and partners
- Media communication (if necessary)
- Contact information for local emergency services

## 6. Testing and Maintenance

Ensure your plan remains effective:

- Regularly review and update your plan (at least annually)
- Conduct practice drills and tabletop exercises
- Test backup systems and recovery procedures
- Train employees on their roles in the continuity plan

## Getting Started: Practical Steps for Small Businesses

1. **Document critical information:** Create a document with emergency contacts, employee contacts, key customer and supplier information, insurance details, and banking information. Store copies both on-site and off-site.
2. **Back up your data:** Implement regular backups of essential business data and store copies securely off-site or in the cloud.
3. **Review your insurance:** Meet with your insurance agent to understand exactly what your current policies cover and identify any gaps.
4. **Create an emergency kit:** Maintain basic emergency supplies at your business location including first aid supplies, flashlights, batteries, and other essentials.
5. **Establish emergency procedures:** Document and share basic evacuation procedures, meeting points, and emergency response roles with all employees.
6. **Identify alternative locations:** Consider where you could temporarily relocate operations if your primary location becomes unusable.
7. **Cross-train employees:** Ensure multiple people know how to perform essential business functions.
8. **Document your processes:** Create written procedures for your most critical business operations.



## Community Resources Available

One Thirty Nine Consulting is committed to supporting our local business community in developing effective continuity plans:

- **Business Continuity Workshop:** We can bring the training to you with a hands-on workshop where you'll develop the framework for your business continuity plan. Registration is available on our website.
- **One-on-One Consultations:** Schedule a personalized meeting to review your specific continuity planning needs. Chamber Members receive an initial consultation at no cost.

## Conclusion

Business disruptions can occur unexpectedly in any community, but with proper planning, your business can weather these challenges successfully. By taking proactive steps to develop a business continuity plan, you're investing in your business's long-term sustainability and contributing to our community's economic resilience.

Remember that perfection shouldn't be the enemy of progress—a basic plan is significantly better than no plan at all. Begin by addressing your most critical business functions, then expand your plan over time as resources allow.

One Thirty Nine Consulting is committed to supporting your business preparedness efforts. For more information or to access any of the resources mentioned in this briefing, contact us at our website ([1thirty9.com](http://1thirty9.com)), by phone at 703.638.9162 or by email at [info@1thirty9.com](mailto:info@1thirty9.com). Together, we can build a more resilient business community prepared to thrive despite challenges.

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*This briefing is part of One Thirty Nine Consulting's ongoing commitment to fostering a resilient business community. The information is provided as general guidance and should be adapted to meet your business's specific needs.*

