

# Business Continuity Plan

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The COVID-19 pandemic has brought with it unprecedented changes and challenges in our life and businesses are faced with obstacles never seen before. While some of us are grappling with the important question of whether we will survive this, a question that is relevant to us all is “How shall businesses continue in these times and thereafter?” It is important to plan to minimize the impact, focus on the priorities and recover from the losses. This is exactly what a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) does.

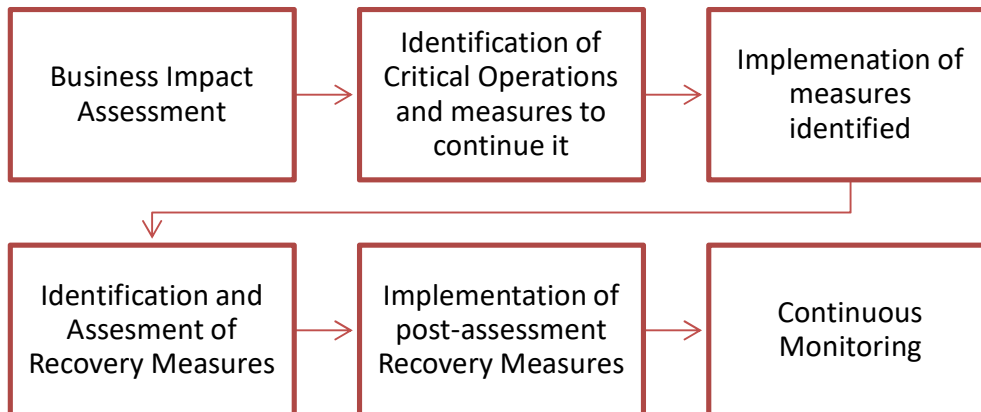
Below we highlight the purpose of a BCP, the key Steps to Develop a BCP and finally a Plan for Immediate Action in the key areas of **Profits, Processes, Infrastructure** and **People**.

## **PURPOSE AND SCOPE:**

Businesses have been facing inefficiencies and disruptions on account of the lockdown and work from home situations. The basic objective of a strategically prepared BCP is to prepare the business for times when a disaster like this hits and sustain its’ continuity at the normal or near normal levels. A BCP, generally, addresses the following issues:

- a) Which areas and sub-areas of the business may be critically affected?
- b) What measures may be adopted to avert the impact?
- c) What measures may be adopted to mitigate the impact and reduce losses?
- d) What strategy may be developed to rationalize the costs?
- e) Whether the business is equipped with sufficient and appropriate technology?
- f) Shall the business be adaptable to newer technology?
- g) How can the interests of the personnel be protected?
- h) What measures may be engaged to recover the business?
- i) Whether any opportunity emerges from these adversities?

## STEPS TO DEVELOP A SUCCESSFUL BCP:



a) Business Impact Assessment (BIA) :

Identify the risks and threats to the operations, financial position, employees, procurement, sales and logistics; and assess the impact of such risks and threats on the operations. BIA is a self-assessment process to establish risk profile of the business and identify the vulnerable areas of the business. The basic objective of the BCP is identified at this stage.

b) Identification of Critical Operations and Measures to continue it :

Based on the benchmark established by Business Impact Assessment, identify the areas / operations which may be vulnerable and yet critical to the functioning of the business. Plan the measures to minimize the risk to the critical areas: Infrastructure, Personnel, and Processes.

c) Implementation of the Measures Identified :

The biggest challenge lies in implementing the measures especially when external factors are involved (for example, in the current situation, Government regulations, dependency on other businesses, restrictions in mobility may disrupt implementation). Most importantly, constant and real-time monitoring, review and updation is required to ensure effective implementation.

d) Identification and Assessment of Recovery Measures :

While sustaining in the times of disasters is imperative, it is equally important to devise plans to re-establish post calamity. Plan to establish the business operations at pre-disaster level and if possible, increase the efficiencies to recover what has been lost. Incidentally, this should also involve identifying opportunities and indigenous innovations that most adversities bring with it.

e) Implementation of post-assessment Recovery Measures :

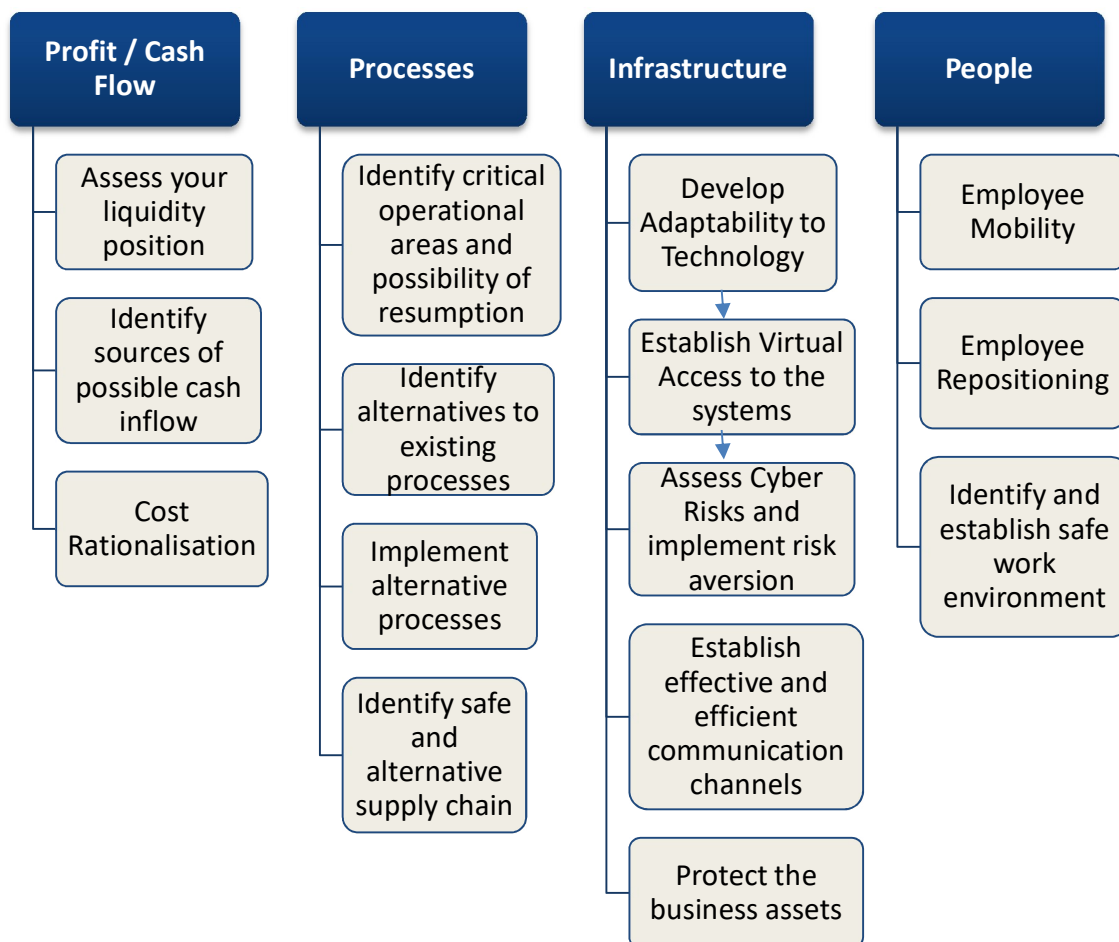
Implementation of post-assessment recovery measures effectively requires dedication not only on the part of the executives but more importantly, from the personnel of the organization. To make it effective, the business needs to identify ways to incentivize and motivate the personnel.

f) Continuous Monitoring :

Not only do the recovery measures need continuous monitoring and review, but the BCP itself needs to be constantly reviewed and updated to incorporate the changing business environment, technology and newer business models. The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us to expect the unexpected and this means the business needs to be ready always.

## PLAN FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION:

An immediate and effective response towards the Business Continuity Plan could mitigate the risks and losses. Here's a list of areas where one may plan and initiate action immediately:



### Employee Motivation

The most important aspect of business continuity and survival is its' personnel. The BCP can be effective only if the implementation is backed by highly motivated personnel. Conscious efforts need to be assigned at each stage towards this aspect.

### Innovation

Lastly, opportunism and innovation during adversities can elevate the business beyond the norms.

***“Difficulties in your life do not come to destroy you but to help you realise your hidden potential and power. Let difficulties know that you, too are difficult”***

- Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

**22 May 2020**

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