

# Business Resilience Toolkit

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## Testing and updating your business continuity plan

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### Transcript:

Did your organisation's business continuity plan anticipate a global pandemic? If you are like most organisations I have spoken with, then the answer is "probably not"... but did your business continuity plan (BCP) include some other scenario which was similar enough that you didn't have to start planning from scratch?

One organisation that I have worked with runs residential facilities for young people with disability. They had anticipated what they would do if chicken pox broke out in a facility and that was in the BCP. It wasn't necessarily COVID-19, but planning for chicken pox gave them a starting point from which to build their response to COVID-19.

My name is Andrew Ellis and I'm a business consultant with CBB.

I haven't always worked as a business consultant, and in fact, I worked as a lifeguard in my teenage years. In that environment, we had to be prepared to handle any emergency that was thrown our way and so we would often practice different types of simulated emergency events.

It strikes me that most businesses don't spend much time in scenario planning and stress-testing their responses to different emergency events.

In business now, it's important to have a BCP – it helps you to be better prepared to manage any crisis that comes along – even if it's not always possible to accurately predict what that specific issue or crisis might be. Ultimately, this will make your business more resilient – and better able to bounce back after a crisis.

If you don't yet have a business continuity plan, then I suggest you have a look at our other video on what to consider when writing one.

So – assuming you have one, how do you go about testing and updating your business continuity plan.

- ▶ Once a year bring your management team together (or Board) – and any other key people you think are needed
- ▶ Pick an issue like a cyber attack, pandemic, fire/flood, customer or employee incident (e.g. car accident) and run a scenario as a bit of a role play
- ▶ Role play through what you would do, who would do what, the roles that each exec team member plays
- ▶ Who takes charge? Who communicates with staff? What comms are needed externally? What if you had a media enquiry?
- ▶ What external org's help might you need? Legal, PR, IT etc

- ▶ When would you notify the Chair or the Board? And how do you engage them appropriately?
- ▶ At the end of the role play, ask yourselves: what worked? What didn't? what would you do different next time? Then you can use those reflections to adjust and update the BCP.

As well as the role play, there will be other changes over time which need to be reflected in the updating of the business continuity plan. For example:

- ▶ What's changed in your organisation – or externally - in the last year, and has your BCP been updated to reflect it? This could be changes in personnel, operational processes, technology, suppliers etc. Hopefully you updated your BCP at the time of the change, but if not, make sure everything is up to date.
- ▶ What have you learned in the past year, and how is this integrated into your BCP? Have you had to respond to an unexpected scenario? If you used your BCP: what worked, what didn't work and what would you do differently now?

What should you do now? Answer: just do it! Take a half hour out in your next exec team meeting or strategy day and play it out. Whilst it simulates a serious issue, it can be a bit of fun, and also a practical learning experience for all.

**Related video to watch next: Writing a business continuity plan.**