

Business Continuity Plan versus Disaster Recovery Plan

When people start to consider their plans to deal with a major event they are confronted by two different terms - Business Continuity Plan and Disaster Recovery Plan. There is quite a difference between these two plans and it is important that an organisation clearly understands what sort of planning it requires.

Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

Business Continuity Planning is best described as the processes and procedures that are carried out by an organisation to ensure that essential business functions continue to operate during and after a disaster. By having a BCP, organisations seek to protect their mission critical services and give themselves their best chance of survival. This type of planning enables them to re-establish services to a fully functional level as quickly and smoothly as possible. BCPs generally cover most or all of an organisation's critical business processes and operations.

Conceptually the thinking for the test of if it is a Business Continuity Plan is; *"if we lost this building how would we recommence our business?"*

Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP)

As part of the business continuity process an organisation will normally develop a series of DRPs. These are more technical plans that are developed for specific groups within an organisation to allow them to recover a particular business application. The most well known example of a DRP is the Information Technology (IT) DRP.

The typical test for a DR Plan for IT would be; *"if we lost our IT services how would recover them?"*

IT DR plans only deliver technology services to the desk of employees. It is then up to the business units to have plans for the subsequent functions.

A mistake often made by organisations is that *'we have an IT DR Plan, we are all ok'*. That is not the case. You need to have a Business Continuity Plan in place for critical personnel, key business processes, recovery of vital records, critical suppliers identification, contacting of key vendors and clients etc.

It is critical that an organisation clearly defines what sort of plan it is working on. It is one of the first questions that we will ask as it defines the approach that needs to be taken and the processes required. We are very familiar with both types of plans, we know the process and profiles and can consult and assist your organisation.