Glossary of Disaster Management Terms

Contents

Introduction

We have compiled this glossary of terms to assist you to understand the "jargon" which is used in business and investment. This glossary is limited to Disaster Management Terms but we publish several other glossaries as well – check our website or call us for details.

Disaster Management Terms

The following terms are drawn from information supplied by members of the BCI, industry experts and from other published glossaries. We acknowledge the conditions of BCI for reproduction. http://www.thebci.org/

- Activation - the implementation of recovery procedures, activities and plans in response to an emergency or disaster declaration.

- Alternative site - an alternative operating location for the usual business functions (i.e. support departments, information systems and manufacturing operations) when the primary facilities are inaccessible. (Associated term: back-up site).

- Alert - a formal notification that an incident has occurred which may develop into a disaster.

- Backlog trap - the effect on the business of a backlog of work that develops when a system or process is unavailable for a long period, and which may take a considerable length of time to reduce.

- BS7799 - a UK BSI Standard for information security management.

- Building Denial - any damage, failure or other condition which causes denial of access to the building or the working area within the building, e.g. fire, flood, contamination, loss of services, air conditioning failure, and forensics.

- Business Continuity - A pro-active process which identifies the key functions of an organisation and the likely threats to those functions. From this information, plans and procedures can be developed thus ensuring key functions continue whatever the circumstances.

- Business Continuity Co-ordinator - a member of the recovery management team who is assigned the overall responsibility for co-ordinator of the recovery planning programme including team member training, testing and maintenance of recovery plans. (Associated terms: business recovery planner, disaster recovery planner, business recovery co-ordinator, disaster recovery administrator)

- Business Continuity Management - those management disciplines, processes and techniques which seek to provide the means for continuous operation of the essential business functions under all circumstances.

- Business Continuity Plan - a collection of procedures and information which is developed, compiled and maintained in readiness for use in the event of an emergency or disaster. (Associated terms: business recovery plan, disaster recovery plan, recovery plan)

- Business Continuity Planning - the advance planning and preparations which are necessary to identify the impact of potential losses; to formulate and implement viable recovery strategies; to develop recovery plan(s) which ensure continuity of organisational services in the event of an emergency or disaster; and to administer a comprehensive training, testing and maintenance programme. (Associated terms: contingency planning, disaster recovery planning, business recovery planning)

- Business Continuity Programme - the ongoing process supported by senior management and funded to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to identify the impact of potential losses, maintain viable recovery strategies and recovery plans, and ensure continuity services through personnel training, plan testing and maintenance. (Associated terms: disaster recovery programme, business recovery programme, contingency planning programme)

- Business Critical Point - the latest moment at which the business can afford to be without a critical function or process.

- Business impact analysis (BIA) - a management level analysis which identifies the impacts of losing company resources. The BIA measures the effect of resource loss and escalating losses over time in order to provide senior management with reliable data upon which to base decisions on risk mitigation and continuity planning. (Associated terms: business impact assessment, business impact analysis assessment)

- Cold Site - one or more data centres or office space facilities equipped with sufficient pre-qualified environmental conditioning, electrical connectivity, communications access, configurable space and access to accommodate the installation and operation of equipment by critical staff required to resume business operations.

- Contingency Fund - an operating expense that exists as a result of an interruption or disaster which seriously affects the financial position of the organisation. (Associated term: extraordinary expense)

- Contingency plan - actions to be followed in the event of a disaster or emergency occurring which threatens to disrupt or destroy the continuity of normal business activities and which seeks to restore operational capabilities. Now largely incorporated within Business Continuity Plan.

- Crisis - an abnormal situation, or perception, which threatens the operations, staff, customers or reputation of an enterprise.

- Crisis Management Team (CMT) - a group of executives who direct the recovery operations whilst taking responsibility for the survival and the image of the enterprise.

- Crisis Plan or Crisis Management Plan - a plan of action designed to support the crisis management team when dealing with a specific emergency situation which might threaten the operations, staff, customers or reputation of an enterprise.

- Critical Service - any service which is essential to support the survival of the enterprise.

- Critical Data Point - the point to which data must be restored in order to achieve recovery objectives.

- Decision Point - the latest moment at which the decision to invoke emergency procedures has to be taken in order to ensure the continued viability of the enterprise.

- Declaration (of disaster) - a formal statement that a state of disaster exists.

- Disaster - any accidental, natural or malicious event which threatens or disrupts normal operations, or services, for sufficient time to affect significantly, or to cause failure of, the enterprise.

- Disaster Recovery - the process of returning a business function to a state of normal operations at an interim minimal survival level and/or re-establishing full scale operations.

- Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) - a plan to resume, or recover, a specific essential operation, function or process of an enterprise.

- Emergency - an actual or impending situation that may cause injury, loss of life, disruption of property or interfere with business operations to such an extent to pose a threat of disaster.

- Emergency Control Centre - the location from which disaster recovery is directed and tracked; it may also serve as a reporting point for deliveries, services, press and all external contacts.

- Emergency Data Services - remote capture and storage of electronic data, such as journalling, electronic vaulting and database shadowing.

- Emergency Management Team - the group of staff who command the resources needed to recover the enterprise's operations.

- Emergency Plan (or Emergency Management Plan) - a plan which supports the emergency management team by providing them with information and guidelines.

- Enterprise - an organisation, a corporate entity; a firm, an establishment, a public or government body, department or agency; a business or a charity.

- Enterprise (large scale or super) - an enterprise that is large and complex, in the sense that it could absorb the impact of losing a complete location or business unit. The normal terminology, and perspective, needs to be scaled down by regarding individual locations or business units as self-sustaining entities.

- Financial Impact - an operating expense that continues following an interruption or disaster, which as a result of the event cannot be offset by income and directly affects the financial position of the organisation.

- Hot site - a data centre facility or office facility with sufficient hardware, communications interfaces and environmentally controlled space capable of providing relatively immediate back-up data processing support. (Associated terms: warm-site, cold-site)

- Human Resource Disaster Recovery - a specific strategy for dealing with risk assessment, prevention, control and business recovery for critical (key) personnel.

- Immediate Recovery Team - the team with responsibility for implementing the business continuity plan and formulating the organisation's initial recovery strategy.

- Impact - Impact is the cost to the enterprise, which may or may not be measured in purely financial terms.

- Incident - any event that may be or may lead to a disaster.

- Invocation - a formal notification to a service provider that its services will be required.

- **Information Security** - the securing or safeguarding of all sensitive information, electronic or otherwise, which is owned by an organisation.

- **Logistics/Transportation team** - a team comprised of various members of departments associated with supply acquisition and material transportation, responsible for ensuring the most effective acquisition and mobilisation of hardware, supplies and support materials.

- **Minimum Resource Requirement (MRR)** – used in undertaking BIAs (Business Impact Analysis) by identifying the absolute minimum people, infrastructure, desks/space, applications and supply of materials required to perform a particular process. The result is then put in the BCP (Business Continuity Plan) as a shopping list of the "must have" items to recover the process.

- **Mobile Standby** - a transportable operating environment, usually complete with accommodation and equipment, which can be transported and set up at a suitable site at short notice.

- **Mobilisation** - the activation of the recovery organisation in response to an emergency or disaster declaration.

- **Off-Site Location** - a storage facility at a safe distance from the primary facility which is used for housing recovery supplies, equipment, vital records etc.

- **Operational Impact** - an impact which is not quantifiable in financial terms but its effects may be among the most severe in determining the survival of an organisation following a disaster.

- **Outage** - the interruption of automated processing systems, support services or essential business operations which may result in the organisation's inability to provide a service for some period of time.

- **Period of Tolerance** - the period of time in which an incident can escalate to a potential disaster.

- **Pre-positional resource** - material (i.e. equipment, forms and supplies) stored at an off-site location to be used in business resumption and recovery operations. (Associated terms. pre-positioned inventory)

- **Reciprocal Agreement** - An agreement in which two parties agree to allow the other to use their site, resources or facilities during a disaster.

- **Recovery** - see system recovery.

- **Recovery Exercise** - an announced or unannounced execution of business continuity plans intended to implement existing plans and / or highlight the need for additional plan development. (Associated terms: disaster recovery test, disaster recovery exercise, recovery test, recovery exercise).

- **Recovery Management Team** - A team of people, assembled in an emergency, who are charged with recovering an aspect of the enterprise, or obtaining the resources required for the recovery.

- **Recovery Plan** - A plan to resume a specific essential operation, function or process of an enterprise. Traditionally referred to as a disaster recovery plan (DRP).

- **Recovery Site** - a designated site for the recovery of computer or other operations, which are critical to the enterprise.

- **Recovery Strategy** - a pre-defined, pre-tested, management approved course of action to be employed in response to a business disruption, interruption or disaster.

- **Recovery Team** - a group of individuals given responsibility for the co-ordination and response to an emergency or recovering a process or function in the event of a disaster.

- **Recovery Window** - The time scale within which time sensitive function or business units must be restored, usually determined by means of a business impact analysis.

- **Resilience** - the ability of a system or process to absorb the impact of component failure and continue to provide an acceptable level of service.

- **Response** - the reaction to an incident or emergency in order to assess the level of containment and control activity required.

- **Restart** - the procedure or procedures that return applications and data to a known start point. Application restart is dependent upon having an operable system.

- **Restoration** - the process of planning for and implementing full scale business operations which allow the organisation to return to a normal service level.

- **Resumption** - the process of planning for and / or implementing the recovery of critical business operations immediately following an interruption or disaster.

- **Risk Assessment & Management** - the identification and evaluation of operational risks that particularly affect the enterprise's ability to function and addressing the consequences.

- **Risk Reduction or Mitigation** - the implementation of the preventative measures which risk assessment has identified.

- **Scenario** - a pre-defined set of events and conditions which describe an interruption, disruption or disaster related to some aspect(s) of an organisation's business for purposes of exercising a recovery plan(s).

- Security Review - a periodic review of the security of tangible and intangible assets which should cover security policy, effectiveness of policy implementation, restriction of access to the assets, accountability for access and basic safety.

- Service Level Agreement (SLA) - an agreement between a service provider and service user as to the nature, quality, availability and scope of the service to be provided.

- Site Access Denial - any disturbance or activity within the area surrounding the site which renders the site unavailable, e.g. fire, flood, riot, strike, loss of services, forensics. The site itself may be undamaged.

- Social Impact - any incident or happening that affects the well-being of a population and which is often not financially quantifiable.

- Standby Service - the provision of the relevant recovery facilities, such as cold-site, warm-site, hot-site and mobile standby.

- Stand Down - formal notification that the alert may be called off or that the state of disaster is over.

- Structured Walk-Through - an exercise in which team members verbally review each step of a plan to assess its effectiveness, identify enhancements, constraints and deficiencies. (Associated term: bench test)

- System Denial - a failure of the computer system for a protracted period, which may impact an enterprise's ability to sustain its normal business activities.

- System Recovery - the procedures for rebuilding a computer system to the condition where it is ready to accept data and applications. System recovery depends on having access to suitable hardware.

- System Restore - the procedures that are necessary to get a system into an operable condition where it is possible to run the application software against the available data. System restore depends upon having a live system available.

- Table Top Exercise - the exercising and testing of a BCP, using a range of scenarios whist not effecting the enterprise's normal operation.

- Tolerance Threshold - the maximum period of time which the business can afford to be without a critical function or process.

- Vendor - an individual or company providing a service to a department or the organisation as a whole. (Associated terms: supplier, third party vendor)

- Vital Record - a record that it is essential for preserving, continuing or reconstructing the operations of the organisation and protecting the rights of the organisation, its employees, its customers and its stockholders.

- Warm Site - a data centre or office facility which is partially equipped with hardware, communications interfaces, electricity and environmental conditioning capable of providing backup operating support. (Associated terms: hot site, cold site)

- Work Area Standby - a permanent or transportable office environment, complete with appropriate office infrastructure.

Further Information

This guide is for general interest - it is always essential to take advice on specific issues. We believe that the facts are correct as at the date of publication, but there may be certain errors and omissions for which we cannot be responsible.