Business Continuity Planning in the Telecommunications Sector

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What is BCM?

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

* Proactive Planning before, during and after a disruptive event.
The Business Impact Analysis (BIA)

Maximum Tolerable Outage (MTO): The maximum period in which an organization can survive without data/function.

Recovery Time Objective (RTO): Time required to recover after disaster before sustaining a long-term crisis.

Recovery Point Objective (RPO): The age of the data that is required to sustain near-normal activities.

Analyses and predicts the impact of a man-made and/or natural disaster by determining what is required to maintain near-normal operations.
54% of companies report they have experienced downtime from a single event, lasting more than 8 hours. *Eight hours of continuous downtime is full day of work.*

75% of all downtime is reported to be due to a power outage. Hardware and human errors round up the top three.

1 in 3 organizations have reported being hit by a virus or a malware attack within the last 5 years

*Source: Invenio IT*
Disaster Recovery (DR) vs BCM

- DR-Reactive Planning detailing steps to be taken *after* a major disruption.

- Disaster Recovery is a subset of BCM Planning.
Why BCM?

- Cost Effective Risk Management
- Shareholders Requiring Risks to be Controlled
- Customer Demand For Resilient Services
- Legal/ Regulatory Requirements
- Reduced Insurance Premiums
- Increased Competition In The Market

Cost Effective Risk Management

Shareholders Requiring Risks to be Controlled

Customer Demand For Resilient Services

Legal/ Regulatory Requirements

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Increased Competition In The Market
What is an essential function in telecoms? BCM? (Man Made Disasters)

- Technology
- Property Services
- Call Centre
- Purchasing & Supply
- Field Services
Non-Operational Plans: (Natural Disasters)

- Bomb Threat
- Riots
- Flooding
- Fire
- Mass casualties
- Prolonged Fuel shortage
- Prolonged Electricity Outage
- Oil Spill
- Earthquakes
- Volcanic Eruptions
Elements of the BCM Plan

- Local Crisis Management Team
  - Names, Functions, contact details
- Stated Crisis levels
- Emergency Operations Centre location-Virtual & Physical
- Key Business functions: Responsibilities, MTO, RTO, Priority Restoration Processes
- Internal & External Suppliers details
- Spares required for effective restoration
- Known locations vulnerabilities to natural disaster: flooding, riot.
- Disaster/Crisis declaration point
- Mutual Assistance Program details
- Critical data Back up
- Communication Plan
The BCM Process

- Maintenance schedules
- Interim Plans
- Implementation
- Terms of Reference
- Recovery Strategies
- Component Analysis
- Recovery Teams
- 10
2017 Hurricane Season Lessons

- Roof top antennas caused significant damages to supporting infrastructure. Replacement costs prohibitive BTC/Telem experience
- Monopole towers withstood hurricane strength winds
- Need to develop mutual assistance programs for competitors on each island
- Fibre network sustained hurricane damages better than microwave
- Use of Ham Radios remain suitable alternate communication mode (Dominica first contact was via Ham Radios)
- Battery failures and short supply of diesel fuel delayed restoration efforts –Solution -Solar Panels
- BCM Proactive Planning remain mainstay for early recovery.
“If you fail to plan, you have already planned to fail.”