

## Will The Civil Contingencies Act Encourage Business Continuity Planning in Small Companies?

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benefit most from implementing simple Continuity practices.

While larger corporations can ride out minor incidents with little impact, the same incident could cripple a small business overnight. As a result Sentinel aims to demystify the process and ensure their clients reap the benefits Continuity Planning can bring to their organisation.

Good Continuity Planning covers major incidents, such as fire, flood, terrorism etc. and will also minimise or eliminate disruption due to more frequent minor events, power cuts, IT hardware failure, human error etc.

Small businesses also tend to use the terms Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery synonymously, in fact, Disaster Recovery is usually restricted to the IT requirements of a company, while Business Continuity covers all the day to day processes of the organisation including IT.

This can result in small companies planning for their technology, but paying little attention to the impact the failure of their telephone system, a major supplier, client, or even the loss of a key member of staff could have on their business.



As companies become increasingly dependent on technology, Continuity planning becomes more important. Few companies are forward thinking enough to plan for the failure of their latest technological acquisition, often leaving it until its failure severely

Plan

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 puts a duty on County and District Authorities to provide Advice and Assistance on contingency planning. It is unclear how all authorities will approach this duty, especially given the planning for a government organisation and a small business can be so varied. Working alongside companies like Sentinel Solutions could provide the answer, and may encourage the most vulnerable business sector to adopt this beneficial process.

Test

Sentinel Solutions, a consulting company based in Leatherhead, Surrey specialises in Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery Planning for small & medium businesses in the South/South East of the UK.

Survive

Established by Peter Lyons, former European IT Director for FleetBoston Financial, Sentinel provides support and guidance to companies implementing Business Continuity Plans. Sentinel's range of services covers the full spectrum from initial plan development to auditing, testing, training and ongoing maintenance.

Even though "Business Continuity" and "Disaster Recovery" are phrases that small businesses are seeing more often, there are still misconceptions over what is involved. The Business Continuity field is awash with acronyms (RTO's, RPO's, BIA's, WAR etc.), which discourage the take up of this critical process amongst small businesses. However, Sentinel contends that small businesses can

impacts their day to day operation. This is just one of the reasons why an ongoing program of reviewing, testing and updating Continuity plans is crucial to their viability.

Unfortunately there is no such thing as a standard Continuity plan, each plan must be tailored to an individual organisation. Even companies in the same line of business will have differences in their plans due to location, operational procedures, client base, management structure, risk appetite etc. This requires organisations to identify where they need expert assistance, Sentinel ensures that their plans are appropriate to the size, scale and budget of the client.

As a small business itself, Sentinel is well placed to understand the needs of its clients and can deliver cost effective planning advice without the overheads of a large organisation. This enables Sentinel to ensure Business Continuity is a process affordable to all companies, regardless of size or industry. Aided by the availability of the latest low cost storage and security products, solutions that would previously have been too expensive are now affordable to small companies. There is no longer an excuse not to have access to critical data almost immediately from any location.

So will the Civil Contingencies Act encourage Business Continuity

Planning in small companies? Sentinel believe that if Local Authorities choose the right partners it could be the catalyst that helps ensure the long term survival of their most vulnerable constituents.

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