

# How to get management buy-in for business continuity planning

When it comes to implementing a business continuity (BC) plan, it's not in the nature of the organizational hierarchy for support to come from below. Most employees have too many duties and deliverables on their plates to spend much time thinking about business continuity and disaster recovery (BC/DR)—and let's face it, that's not what they were hired for. To gain buy-in across the organization, business continuity planning has to be a directive handed down from the top. Even after events like the Japanese earthquake and tsunami and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, gaining the attention, buy-in and active support of top management can still be an uphill battle for BC/CR planners, many of whom have other duties of their own to tend to.

**To get the support you need for your effort, here are some tips:**

1. **Go in with specific objectives** – Know exactly how much funding, which resources and what level of support you need and expect.
2. **Take what you can get** – If your proposal calls for a two-hour recovery point objective and management is willing to commit to achieving a 24-hour recovery point objective, take the 24-hour recovery point objective over outright rejection.
3. **Be ready to overcome objections** – For instance, if the objection is cost, be prepared to justify the effort as an investment.
4. **Present the benefits** – Benefits include the safeguarding of people, assets, data, reputation, customer relationships and avoiding the costs of downtime.
5. **Make the ROI case** – Show not only how much business and revenue can be salvaged with business continuity planning, but also how daily operations and competitiveness are improved.
6. **Research your competition** – If your top competitors are investing in business continuity, your management will be more likely to buy in.
7. **Recruit other sponsors in the organization to back you up** – If you already have the support of staff in other departments, you'll have an easier time selling executive management.
8. **Scare them with the legal ramifications** – After a major disaster, every communication and action taken by top management before, during and after the event will be highly scrutinized and second-guessed by regulators.

If a disaster happens, your company will be questioned as to whether they adhered to statutes, industry regulations and standards for having and implementing a proper business continuity plan. Prosecutors may use the "Prudent Man" standard, derived from common law, to establish if your management exercised a minimum standard of care to safeguard life

and assets as compared to the actions of a reasonable person in similar circumstances. In fact, your management may be held to a higher standard of care, as arguably, they are more knowledgeable and skilled than an ordinary person.

Ultimately, the executives of the company may be found criminally liable and face heavy fines, jail time or both. On top of this, employees, investors, customers and other stakeholders may sue management and the organization itself with the potential for damages in the millions or even billions of dollars.

**If you present your ideas clearly and knowledgeably, even the toughest executive team will consider your proposal to implement business continuity planning. It just makes good business sense.**

Want to know more? Visit [www.MIR3.com/bcguide](http://www.MIR3.com/bcguide) for a free copy of *The Definitive Guide to Business Continuity Planning*.

