

# Seven Mistakes Companies Make in Business Continuity Planning



As companies plan for future business operations, the strategic focus is often on expanding staff or space or securing funding. But companies with a holistic vision will also look toward the inevitable disruptions of the future—both the obvious and the truly unprecedented. It's not a matter of *if* a disruption will happen, but *when*.

Some of the most common mistakes companies make when planning for disruption include:

- 1 Not having a business continuity plan at all:** A business continuity plan is something like insurance—everyone knows they need it, but other demands, distractions or priorities keep companies from following through. When a disruption occurs, managers and decision makers are often left scrambling and piecing together a stopgap plan that may not be sufficient to see the company through the disruption.
- 2 Overlooking the full features of their existing communication systems:** Key to any business continuity plan is communication with customers and employees. It's easy for companies to focus on the way they do business right now without considering what might happen to change operations. Fully leveraging the features of their existing systems can improve the chance of weathering the disruption.
- 3 Parking all knowledge with one employee:** Sometimes, a business emergency or disruption involves an employee. Family emergencies or sudden departures can have serious consequences for business operations if one employee is key to the IT or communication system.
- 4 Ignoring some the points of failure:** In order to keep operations going during an extended disruption, companies need to look at all the potential points of failure. For instance, it's great that sales staff can keep operating in an extended disruption, but it might not mean much if accounts receivable can't make collection calls or technicians can't schedule appointments.
- 5 Not testing the plan:** Even the best plan needs regular testing to find the weak points in the system. Smart businesses will test their disaster recovery and business continuity plans at least once per year or even as often as quarterly. An organization such as a hospital or airport may test more frequently and in different ways than a chain of restaurants or an entirely online retail outlet.
- 6 Neglecting the plan:** Every plan should be reviewed and updated regularly. The frequency can depend on your business. Regular updates give companies the opportunity to evaluate systems and technology to determine if equipment should be retired or upgraded. It can also help reveal where new resources and improved systems can give the business an edge when the next disruption happens.
- 7 Not leveraging the reporting functions of your systems:** Reports can give valuable information about how communication is coming into your company and how customers are interacting with the company. Using reports to find and address technology challenges can help you prepare to maintain operations during disruption.



Download our e-book *“Working Through Disruption: How Your Communication System is the Key to Surviving an Emergency.”*

**Planning for disruption is key to maintaining operations when emergencies arise. If your communication system isn't ready to handle the next disruption, Allstream® can help.**

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