

The Advisor



Issue #4

Greetings

We are excited to announce that Rusty Waterfield, Old Dominion University, Gary T. Lupton, CBCP, TowneBank, and Cathie Brown, IT Governance Solutions, LLC, will be speaking on "Disaster Planning & Recovery".

On page 2 is an article that describes tips on how to deal with a crisis if your business does not have a crisis plan.

Rusty Waterfield, Assistant Vice President for Computer Services and CIO of ODU

Rusty Waterfield is the Assistant Vice President for Computing Services and CIO of Old Dominion University and has been in this position for over three years. His primary responsibilities include aligning Information Technology (IT) to the University's goals and strategic plan, developing and maintaining highly reliable IT operational services, and serving as the senior IT decision maker. He joined Old Dominion University in 1986 as a systems engineer. He served as the lead network engineer in the development and implementation of the University's campus network infrastructure and local area networks. He is an active member of the Internet2 organization and led the University's involvement in the national research network, the National Lambda-Rail (NLR). He led a collaborative effort to develop a regional optical network in Hampton Roads called the Eastern Internetworking Technology Enterprise (ELITE). ELITE connects ODU, the College of William & Mary, the Jefferson Lab, NASA/Langley Research Center, USJFCOM and the Virginia Modeling and Analysis Simulation Center (VMASC) to the NLR node. He received a BS in Computer Science from ODU in 1984.

Upcoming Events

June 18th - "Ethics"

ODU's CPA Review begins May 11th and continues every Monday during the Summer and Fall '09 semester. If you would like more information contact Walter Berry at wberry@odu.edu.

2nd Annual HR Controllers/Management Accountants Conference on October 12-13th, 2009 at ODU.

RSVP

If you would like to attend the HRFEF meeting on Thursday May 21st, please email cowanj@donrichard.com by close of business May 15, 2009.

Time:

Registration: 11:30 - 11:45

Lunch: 11:45 - 1:00

Speaker will begin promptly at 12:00

Cost: \$25 per person

We accept Cash and checks made out to: Don Richard Associates

Location:

Holiday Inn Executive Center
5655 Greenwich Rd
Virginia Beach, VA 23462

This session offers 1 CPE credit

Gary Lupton, CBCP, Senior Vice President, TowneBank

Gary Lupton is a Senior Vice President & Technical Project Manager with Technology Services of TowneBank, located at the Member Service Center in Suffolk, VA. He is a member of the TowneBank Business Continuity Planning Committee, the Virginia Beach Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Business Recovery Association of Virginia (BRAV), Hampton Roads Chapter of Association of Continuity Planners (ACP), Suffolk Emergency Preparedness Committee and a designated TowneBank representative to the Hampton Roads Emergency Management Committee (HREMC). He is a Certified Business Continuity Planner through the Disaster Recovery Institute and has over 27 years of diversified banking experience. Additionally, he is currently serving as the Executive Director for the newly created "Virginia 1st", which is a Commonwealth of Virginia group focused on recovery of Financial Institutions during crisis.

Gary earned a BS in Business Management from Old Dominion University and is a graduate of the Virginia Bankers School of Bank Management.

Cathie Brown, President, IT Governance Solutions, LLC

Cathie Brown is currently working as President and Founder of IT Governance Solutions, LLC, a consulting company offering services in Information Security, Risk Management and Compliance. Cathie also has varied experience in both public and private sectors. She recently served as Deputy Chief Information Security Officer for the Commonwealth of Virginia, and previously held various IT positions in the health-care sector where she focused on HIPPA compliance and Information Security. Her experience includes systems engineer work in mainframe and distributed environments, networking and systems security. She has earned certification in the Governance of Enterprise IT (CGEIT) and the Certified Information Security Manager certification (CISM) from ISACA, certification as Project Management Professional (PMP) from the Project Management Institute, and Certified Information System Security Professional (CISSP) from ISC(2).

Top Ten Tips on How to Deal With a Crisis - For Businesses Without a Crisis Plan

by Dominic Cockram, www.ezinearticles.com

As human beings, we're very good at thinking that really bad things only happen to other people - or that by virtue of Murphy's Law, they are inevitable and unavoidable. The same attitude applies in many businesses despite well documented casualties from recent events such as flooding and supply chain issues. Crisis planning is an essential component of being a well managed and resilient business and offers the best chance of staying up and running after a significant disruption.

What qualifies as a business crisis?

The nature of a crisis can vary widely - from natural disaster, through a leaked memo containing sensitive information to the office next door involving you in their crisis default. In other words, a crisis can come from almost anywhere but by definition is unexpected and has the potential to have negative consequences. A crisis may affect the safety of staff, the availability of resources, critical systems, shareholders and potentially threaten the mid to long term success or existence of the business.

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Here are some tips on what to do if a crisis strikes your business before you have a crisis plan in place.

1. Find out what has happened

This may sound like an odd thing to begin with, but it's arguably the most important. When a crisis strikes, whatever the cause, it can be hard to get a handle on what exactly has provoked the alert. How have you heard about it? Are your sources reliable? Do you have any staff that can give you eyewitness accounts? Only once you know the true nature of the crisis and its extent can you deal with it appropriately. Separating rumor from fact can be more difficult than you imagine in the immediate aftermath of a crisis.

2. Clearly identify a crisis team and team leader

The key characteristic of a crisis team is that they need to work well together, while also having a wide range of skills and knowledge. There must be at least one person with enough authority within the team to make strategic decisions and authorize spending as some crisis will necessitate emergency funds to cover accommodation, travel and food for those involved.

The team leader does not necessarily have to be the most knowledgeable about the business, as long as he or she has the ability to stay calm, assimilate information presented by the crisis team, can command respect and act decisively, delegating as necessary. People are likely to be stressed, sometimes panicky - can the crisis team leader handle that?

3. Assess the impact (on your people, assets, customers and reputation)

Once you understand the extent of the crisis, you can evaluate how it will impact your business. Are any staff hurt or in danger? Do extra members of staff need to be brought in (because the crisis has happened out of business hours or during a holiday for example)? Do you have any stock that is at risk? Are you still able to provide essential customer services, or will you need to close? How will the press react?

It is important to understand what at this stage is time critical for the business so you can prioritize what is needed to continue operating effectively.

4. Develop an action plan

Having assessed the impact, determining what needs to happen in a methodical way ensures that nothing is left out nor actions duplicated. Most crises involve time pressure; some people refer to a "golden hour" immediately after the crisis has occurred; what you do in the first hour can significantly impact upon the outcome. Don't underestimate how chaotic things can be during some crises - once immediate responses have been carried out (i.e. evacuation of a building) time taken to lay out a plan could potentially alter the outcome for your business. A plan, however basic, will help ensure there is integration and coordination in what happens - and minimize the likelihood of 'left hand/right hand not talking syndrome'.

5. Develop a time line of what is happening when

This is clearly going to differ depending on the nature of each crisis, but based on your plan could include events such as arrival of critical staff members, arrival of technical support teams, anticipated restoration of power, broadcast times etc. Outlining when key events are going to happen enables the efficient allocation of resources.

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The best crisis teams are able to focus on the future effectively, see needs approaching and prepare for them as well as avoiding issues that inevitably occur along the way. Many times the crisis is just the first in a string of events that ensue as a result of the disruption to normality.

6. Implement the plan

Having developed the plan, the next major challenge is communicating it effectively to those that need to know. This is a real test of your team and, without a pre-determined and rehearsed crisis plan already in place, one of the most difficult areas to manage well 'on the hoof'. How you talk to staff, executives, emergency services and the many other people who need to know what you are doing and what is critical to your success in managing the crisis and your reputation. At the end of the day, you must DO something. The worst plan is one that arrives too late.

7. Maintain a log of decisions, actions and issues

Maintaining a detailed log of decisions, actions and issues is an important component of crisis management. Not only will it enable you to ensure all actions are completed on a continuous basis and help tie up loose ends when the crisis is over, it may become a legal document backing up accounts of events should litigation ensue. Choose the person to maintain it with care and ensure it is reviewed by the crisis leader on a regular basis.

8. Develop an internal and external communications plan

Communications are critical - brief those who need to know on a regular basis: the media, your staff, stakeholders and customers. However, it is important that the right information reaches the right people in a timely fashion so development of a clear communications plan will support you in achieving this. Effective communication in the face of crisis can greatly enhance your reputation.

9. Look after your staff and their welfare

Your staff may be coping with shock, stress and more. Ensuring their welfare is clearly within the remit of a responsible employer, but it also means that the crisis won't be worsened by neglect of their needs. In some instances there can be long term impacts if issues are not dealt with correctly in the early stages.

10. Manage your information

One of the greatest challenges in dealing with a crisis is the management of information as it flows in and out of the crisis team. This is where you develop a clear picture of what is reality and separate fact from fiction. The lynch pin of your response will be centered around the information you receive and how you respond to it so its processing must be fast and accurate. White boards, flip charts and briefings all help.

And when the crisis is over?

On returning to normality, review how you dealt with what happened and learn the lessons for next time. If you are reading this and are lucky enough to have escaped a business crisis so far, do consider developing a crisis plan - the time spent planning is never wasted and will enable a much more effective and controlled response, reducing the strain on your staff - "train hard, fight easy" is a worthwhile maxim in the world of crisis management and is supported by the experience of all those businesses who have gone before you.