

Business Continuity in Epidemic/Pandemic Conditions

Webtorials Editorial/Analyst Division

Produced and distributed by:



Today's Speakers



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Background

- We are currently in the midst of an evolving epidemic and/or pandemic of the H1N1 (aka “swine”) influenza
- Webtorials’ Editorial/Analyst Division has conducted a survey of its community concerning the state of readiness to deal with Business Continuity (BC) in the event an outbreak of this type
- Most enterprises and other organizations are woefully unprepared for “business as usual” in the case of:
 - Outbreaks within the workplace
 - Outbreaks within schools, in which case the parents
 - Must stay home with their children
 - Become potential carriers of a major health hazard
- Our hope is that this outbreak is of minimal consequence while serving as a “wake-up call” for more robust planning



Business Continuity

- Characteristics
 - A key element of a Disaster Recovery / Business Continuity (DR-BC) Plan
 - Critical for survival of businesses
 - Commercial enterprises
 - Public sector
 - Service providers / Carriers
 - Viewed as being of critical import “too late” in the wake of a crisis
 - Importance quickly diminishes on an exponentially decaying scale
 - Rapidly changing as business evolves from an “Industrial Age” to “Information Age” economy



Survey Population Highlights

- Webtorials community surveyed
 - 200+ completions of survey on April 27-28, 2009
- Worldwide base
 - About 50% US-based
- Multiple sectors
 - Includes business networking professionals, public sector (government, education, etc.) networking professionals, service providers, carriers, and equipment vendor, and others
- Wide range of company sizes
- Variety of job titles and involvement in business continuity
- Details at end of presentation



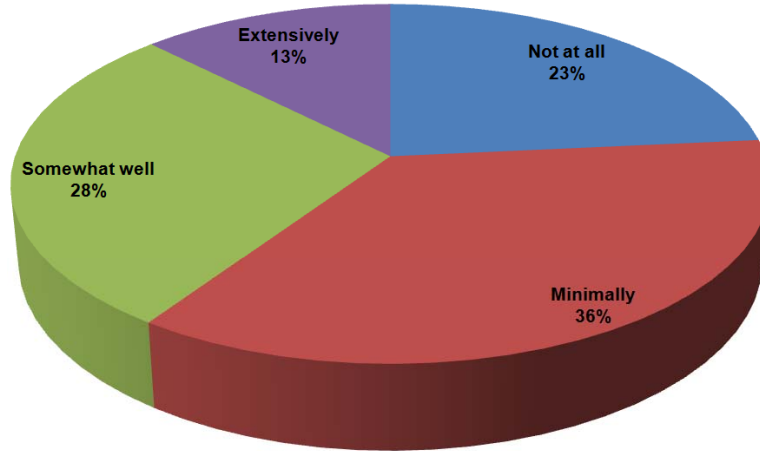
Key Findings

- Over half of the respondents have Business Continuity plans which address a medical epidemic/pandemic either minimally (36%) or not at all (23%)
- The current economic conditions have resulted in either "some decrease" or a "significant decrease" in the ability to plan/implement/support Business Continuity in the event of an epidemic/pandemic
- The current H1N1 outbreak will have a moderate or strong impact on prompting companies to update/review their Business Continuity plans for more than 1/3 of the companies, and will have a slight impact on an additional 39%



Awareness of Epidemic/Pandemic

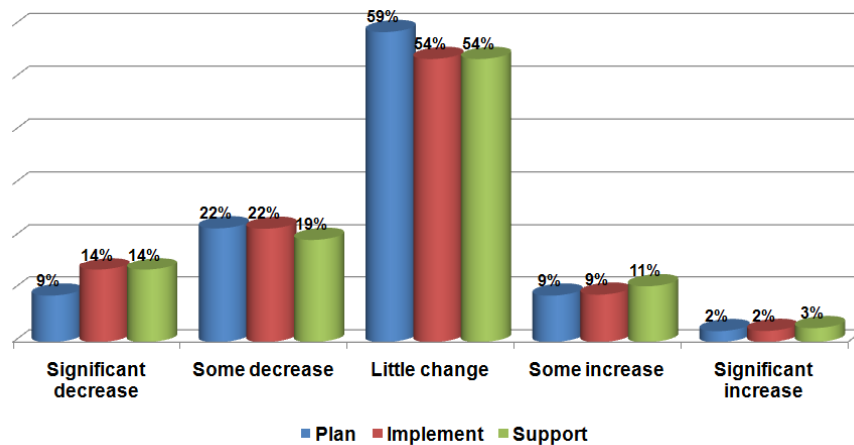
- To what extent does your current Business Continuity plan include provisions to address a medical epidemic/pandemic?



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Current Economic Conditions

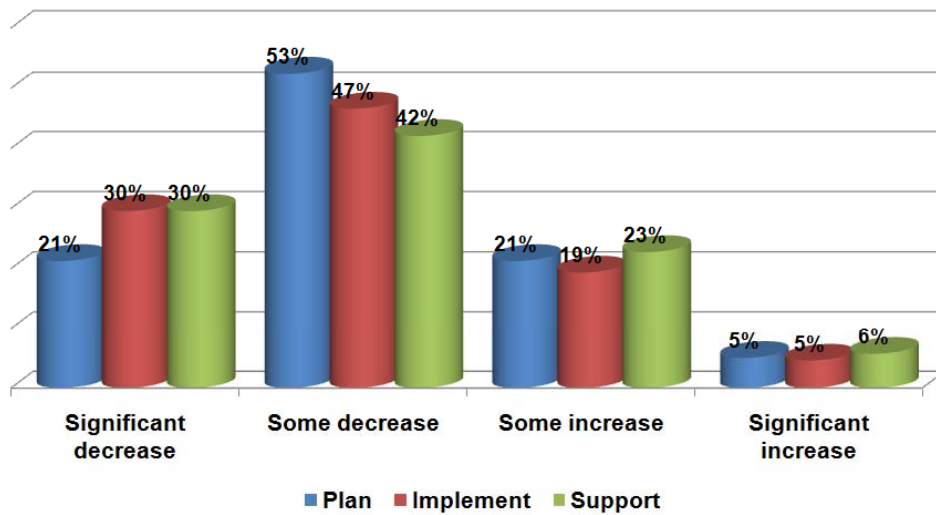
- To what extent have the current economic conditions affected the staffing/capability to plan/to implement/to support Business Continuity functions in the event of an epidemic/pandemic?



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Current Economic Conditions

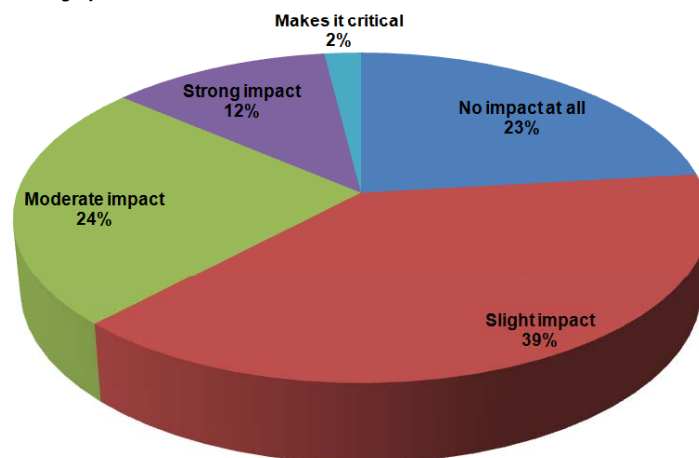
- Same question, but limited to those with a change...



Webtentials

Review Plans

- How likely is it that the current H1N1 influenza outbreak will prompt your company to update and/or review its Business Continuity plans sooner than it would have otherwise?



Webtentials

Ability to Function

- To what extent are each of the following able to function *effectively* from a remote or teleworking site?
 - Sorted in order of aggregate efficacy

	Not at all	Minimally	Fairly well	Minor degradation	Full capabilities
IT Staff	2%	11%	30%	27%	29%
Sales/Marketing	2%	16%	29%	25%	28%
Engineering	5%	19%	30%	21%	25%
Corporate operations (Administration)	4%	22%	30%	22%	22%
Customer service	6%	23%	28%	21%	22%
Operations (Core business)	7%	21%	29%	22%	22%
Billing/Accounting	8%	23%	26%	22%	20%
Training	14%	31%	23%	19%	14%



Respondent Comments

- "Core operations for government include paving roads as well as providing fire and police protection. It is hard to provide those services across a network, I'm afraid."
- "We are a school. Our primary function depends on the classroom, so remote operations isn't a huge option."
- "It is hard to justify the threat level to the owner. It has taken me three years to get a SAME weather alarm for damaging storm or lightning with sirens. As you probably have guessed, we are a resort."
- "Operations can only be based in operational areas - you can't produce or refine oil from home!!"
 - "...Although remote operations is under development as we instrument production more and more intensively - but that's mainly to keep expats at home. The need for people on the ground locally can't be mitigated. All us 'overhead' backroom folks can manage pretty well though."



Respondent Comments

- "We had a similar issue a few years back with BSE ('mad cow disease') which restricted access to big chunks of the countryside, and then with avian flu, so we got some practice."
- "Due to the fact that more or less every employee is equipped with a laptop, they can work from home or any other place where internet connectivity is given."
 - "Only operations and customer service is affected because they need to handle phone calls from external and internal customers and the ACD functionality can not extend to their mobile or home phones."
- "We just instituted remote capabilities in our IT infrastructure allowing remote access for supporting our essential operations as well as the ability to work from another facility than HQ."
- "Company is already mostly telecommuting-based."

Respondent Comments

- "We are an IP network system provider; each employee has full access to network and phones as virtual home or office workers. If we all had to stay home, business would be minimally affected. Sales would be most effected due to lack of face to face customer interactions, but we have remote meeting capabilities for video, voice, and web interaction services."
- "Encouraged staff with home offices to stock up on essentials so they could work for a week or more without going out."
- "We are already in the normal process of reviewing the BCP."
- "The business is getting used to alerts and considering these alerts as 'false alarms.'"

Reminder: Key Findings

- The Business Continuity plans for over half of the respondents address a medical epidemic/pandemic either minimally (36%) or not at all (23%)
- The current economic conditions have resulted in either "some decrease" or a "significant decrease" in the ability to plan/implement/support Business Continuity in the event of an epidemic/pandemic
- The current H1N1 outbreak will have a moderate or strong impact on prompting companies to update/review their Business Continuity plans for more than 1/3 of the companies, and will have a slight impact on an additional 39%

Recommendations and Plans

- Medical epidemics and pandemics are an integral part of an effective Business Continuity / Disaster Recovery plan
- Sooner or later, a situation will occur, whether locally or globally, where normal "office access" will not be available
 - Information-economy businesses should function well
- This is not an issue that will go away, though the impact will decay quickly with time

Additional Resources

- Respond to the Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity survey currently being conducted at Webtorials for up-to-date input and response
 - URL tbd
- Follow the “Wide Area Networking Alert:
 - Network health and personal health go hand-in-hand
 - <http://www.networkworld.com/newsletters/frame/2009/022309wan1.html>
- Follow our blogs to discuss this and other topics
 - <http://ashtonmetzler.blogspot.com/>
 - <http://webtorials-feedback.blogspot.com/>
- Demographics
 - <http://webtorials.com/main/resource/papers/kubernan/BC-Pandemic/demographics/demographics.html>



THANK YOU!

