

2012 DISASTER RECOVERIES - LESSONS LEARNED

2012 was a historic year for disasters. All told, Agility responded to over 4200 recovery events in 44 states and provinces.

The information below highlights the key lessons learned from our experience helping businesses recover in 2012. We hope this checklist adds value to your on-going business continuity planning efforts.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call one of Agility's disaster recovery specialists at 866-364.9696.

✓	Test Your Plan
	Though you probably back up your data, it should be backed up to a provider outside your local area where it could be subject to the same threats as your primary location.
	Having your data stored off site is critical, but so is testing a full restoration of that data. Include a variety of scenarios like a regional power outage or an off-site restoration with unfamiliar equipment.
	Test your alert notification (Text/Email) system, and discuss your crisis communications plan should the alert notification system be inoperable.
	Conduct a formal review of your crisis plan with employees, and ensure each has a working knowledge of what to do.
	Involve your primary vendors & suppliers in an exercise or discuss their internal business continuity strategy. Ensure it will serve your needs appropriately.
	Contact your electrician to determine your office's power demand during a power loss. Make note of all details crucial to restoring power during an interruption.
✓	Assess the Impact on Your Customer Base
	Cash flow can quickly become a major issue if your customers are unable or unwilling to do business with following a disaster. Though your own facilities may be undamaged, your customers could be faced with a different reality. Anticipate that evacuations and widespread destruction of housing can delay transactions for an extended time period.
	Often following large regional events that require a lengthy recovery process, interest in your products and/or services may fall off dramatically during the recovery period. Entertainment, luxury services and products, and other areas where discretionary income is spent can become a lower priority overnight.
✓	Properly Prepare Your Supply Chain
	If relying on a 3 rd party IT consultant or provider for the bulk of your systems maintenance, establish a firm expectation of anticipated response time during a time of heavy demand on their organization.
	Collaborate with key vendors such as your Payroll Provider, Attorney and CPA's offices to understand their business continuity plans for maintaining service to your organization should they experience an interruption.
	Even events occurring outside your area can impact shipping & delivery service. Ensure you have contingency plans in place for delays and interruptions to service.
	You're only as strong as your weakest link. This link in the supply chain is every bit as important as your primary physical operations. Take steps to procure backup supply chain options and understand your primary suppliers' recovery plans in addition to your own.

✓	Reliance on a Single Point of Failure
	Depending on a single individual to execute your plan is a recipe for failure. Cross train key personnel in multiple facets of your plan and critical business processes.
	Compromised fuel supplies can derail most plans. Establish at least 2 fuel vendors for generator fuel deliveries and attempt to secure one with resources outside your immediate area. Take steps to protect underground fuel tanks or those in basements from floodwaters.
	Diversify your mobile phone service providers so no single carrier can interrupt your wireless communications if they fail.
	Ensure you have alternative means of powering mobile devices. Backup batteries, car chargers, solar and crank chargers are all good options.
	If your crisis communications plan or alert notification system utilizes text-based messaging, ensure all employees are familiar with the system and able to receive and send texts efficiently.
	Establish at least one landline for emergencies in your office, or at the home of someone in your senior leadership team.
	Consider an alternative if you rely on a single recovery site; such as a neighboring location in the same area or a hot site/cold site subjected to the same threats as your primary location.
	If you have a permanent generator installed, take precautions to prevent damage from floodwaters, flying debris, etc. Ensure the generator is tested regularly and maintenance is performed according to manufacturer's recommendations.
	Ensure that your crisis communications plan calls for multiple spokespersons in the event primary person (President, CEO, Board Member) is unavailable to contact media, clients, employees & other stakeholders.
✓	Properly Inform & Prepare Employees
	Take steps to assist employees in preparing themselves and their families at home to make it more likely they will be willing and able to report to work following a crisis. Utilize free resources from www.Ready.gov , www.RedCross.org and www.Do1thing.com for helping your employees prepare.
	Cross train employees in all critical business functions to prepare for higher than normal absenteeism and long term staffing shortages.
	Ensure new hires and those changing positions within the company are appropriately briefed on emergency procedures and recovery strategies.
	Develop a transportation plan for employees including car-pooling, directions to their residences and emergency evacuation routes.
	For those with a work-from-home strategy, test every aspect of this plan regularly to ensure connectivity issues are resolved before a crisis. Have a contingency plan in place for situations where widespread utility outages will impact this aspect of your plan. Be sure to address complications arising from lowered productivity issues due to family and home-life situations.

✓	Properly insure for physical losses, downtime, lost revenue & added expenses
	Speak with your insurance agent about the most likely threats in your area and ensure coverage doesn't exclude those threats.
	Consider obtaining added expense coverage for expenses incurred while conducting a post-disaster recovery.
	Be sure to do a thorough analysis of how much lost revenue insurance you should carry in the event your production or operations are interrupted for an extended period of time.
	Speak with your insurance agent about the merits of carrying off-premise power or utility service interruption insurance to mitigate the risks of a power loss resulting from an event that doesn't take place on your premises.
✓	Anticipate Costs of Recovery
	If your plan calls for a distant hot or cold site relocation, be sure to understand the costs involved in transporting employees (and sometimes their families) to these alternate sites including daily costs of lodging, meals, etc.
	Be sure to take into account the potential for commodity shortages and the resulting increase in prices associated with critical supplies such as fuel for vehicles & generators.
✓	Manage Restoration of Operations
	Once operations are restored, you can often expect a high volume of customers to return all at once due to a variety of reasons; including pent up demand, lack of competition & a surge of interest in your products/services. Anticipate this demand and the workload required. Think through staffing, office hours, supplies, etc.
	When operations resume, customers may be unaware you are open for business, or unable to receive communications about your status. Take steps to ensure you can properly advertise/notify your client base of your status as quickly as possible.
	Your facilities may be repaired and operations restored, but employees may still be unable or unwilling to report due to lingering family or home issues. Clearly set expectations for reduced staffing and workload.

Agility is your trusted advisor and partner in preparedness through these events.

For more information call 866.364.9696 or visit www.agilityrecovery.com