



How Well Do You Know Your Business?

By Mark Clarke, senior consultant, business continuity services, Sollievo

How well do you know your business? This is an important question, especially when it comes to your business continuity planning. Here's a quick scenario to make you think. A hurricane has just passed through and the electricity goes out. You find out that the electricity can't be restored for up to a week due to residual weather issues and flooding. How does this affect you? Can you continue your operations? If you rely on a system for processing, how will you do so during the week-long power outage?

If you don't know all aspects of your business and how they relate to one another, you can't properly plan for a disruption like the hurricane scenario. That being said, the best way to know and understand your business is to conduct a business impact analysis (BIA).

A BIA is designed to look at all of your processes, one by one, to determine your recovery time objectives (RTO); your recovery point objectives (RPO); your maximum allowable downtime; when your process/business will be impacted by a disruption; when your membership will be impacted by a disruption; regulations that affect the process; potential financial impact; dependencies; legal fines or penalties; IT recovery time frames; and data classifications. These are only a few of the items identified by a BIA.

This identification will help you determine the criticality of each of your processes, from which you can prioritize your preparations. Would you want to spend your precious resources (people, time and money) on a process that would have little impact to your business or on something that could potentially put you out of business within a very short period of time? By applying your resources to your critical processes first, you are placing yourself in a better position to recover or continue your operations should something occur. Once all of your critical processes have been addressed, you can then move down the line to less critical ones.

By completing a BIA, you are well on your way to understanding what your business would need if one of your processes or your entire business was disrupted. The next step is to perform a risk assessment. This will allow you to see what a potential interruption could do.



Conducting a BIA at least annually (as stated in FFIEC guidance) is a necessary step. This will ensure that your business continuity plans are viable, based on accurate information and able to aid in continuing your business operations should something unforeseen come along.

For more information, visit www.sollievo.com or contact a senior consultant at (855) 605-5664 or seniorconsultant@sollievo.com.

About Mark Clarke

Mark Clarke is senior consultant, business continuity services for Sollievo. Mr. Clarke's experience consists of directing, facilitating, and coordinating business continuity programs, and ensuring that the program is maintained and tested in consideration of business needs, and in compliance with internal policies, standards, and regulatory guidelines. Mr. Clarke is also experienced in conducting operational risk assessments.
