



**SUNGARD**

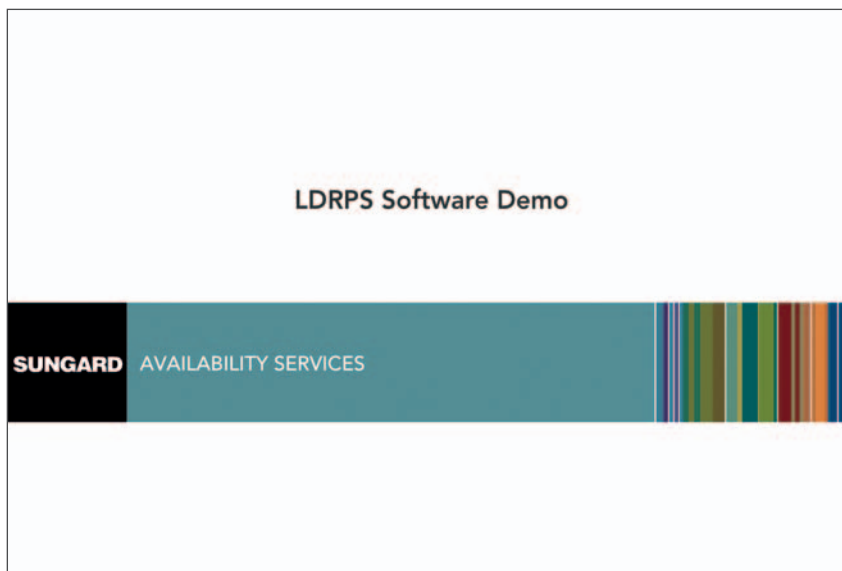
# THE BUSINESS CASE FOR BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

*When it comes to building a business continuity management (BCM) program that's complete, current, and compliant, there is no substitute for BCM software. But the benefits of a good BCM program extend beyond just using an automated tool. Leveraging the right BCM software and services provider also makes real business sense, before, during and after business interruption.*

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## Video

**Click here** to watch a demonstration of SunGard BCM Software.



### LDRPS Software Demo

There are two typical approaches to business continuity management and planning. One is to simply document incident-response resources and the procedures that explain what to do, how to do it and whom to notify. The other is to use purpose-built, pre-configured software that automates plan building, maintenance, and execution.

For many organisations, the documentation approach has been the traditional plan-building method. In fact, according to a **BC Management survey**<sup>1</sup>, 50% of organisations still use this method but fall short of effective continuity management planning. It involves one staff member, sometimes a designated plan administrator, more often a person with other full-time responsibilities, gathering input from the business regarding which systems and operations are most critical. He or she then builds out a business impact analysis, an incident response plan, call lists, and recovery procedures. After a stakeholder review and distribution, the document then rests somewhere on a shared network drive, or, less helpfully, in a binder on shelf, untouched until there's an audit or a real disaster. The time to verify whether the plan works is not at time of disaster.

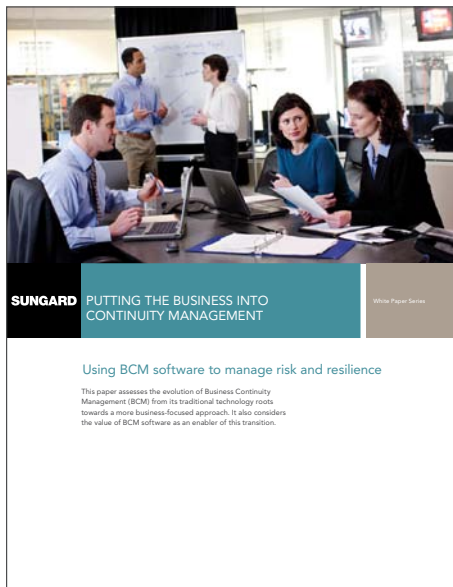
<sup>1</sup> Weekly BCM Research Data Point, 1/27/2011

<http://www.bcmanagement.com/1/post/2011/01/weekly-bcm-research-data-point18.html>

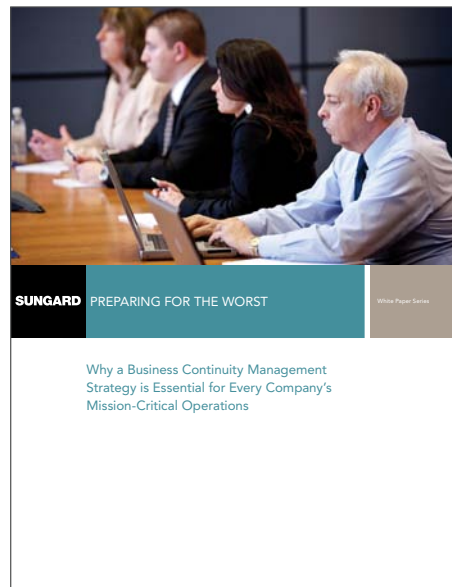
BCM-specific software brings the plan documents and the process to life. When properly implemented, all of the organisation's people, resources and business needs are represented as data elements and stored within software's database. The software guides the planning professional with built-in templates and best-practices, and provides the flexibility to help you recover from multiple scenarios of unexpected incidents. When one occurs, it delivers all of the procedures, resources, contact information, communications and priorities necessary to manage the incident and return the business to normal operation.

## Further Reading

Check out these SunGard white papers for more insight into moving toward effective and reliable business continuity planning.



**Putting the Business into Continuity Management:**  
Using BCM Software to Manage Risk and Resilience



**Preparing for the Worst:**  
Why a Business Continuity Management Strategy is Essential for Every Company's Mission-Critical Operations

In contrast, a document created with a word processing program must be written from scratch without the benefit of templates or guidance. It is cumbersome for multiple people to simultaneously review, edit and approve. And it offers no reporting, information-sharing, or notification capabilities. Building a BCM plan document from square one can cost an organisation a great deal of time and money as staff members must do the vast majority of the work.

Business continuity management software with the right configurability and customisation capabilities can be tailored to meet an organisation's specific performance needs during a recovery process. The software effectively delivers a plan suited to the specific organisation when it empowers the plan administrator or business users to adjust anything from the plan's overall scope to the way in which data is entered into a specific field. The greater the type and number of configurable settings available, the more complete a fit the software solution, and the plan it produces, for the organisation it supports.

**In the long term, a BCM plan built with the right software can also save an organisation more money and time than a static document, or no plan at all.**

Business continuity management software requires a careful evaluation and commitment from executive management because, like other enterprise software initiatives, it is an investment. And like any investment, the organisation should expect a reasonable return on investment (ROI). When evaluating a BCM software solution against the documentation approach, and against other BCM software solutions, the ultimate goal is to help optimise operations while mitigating financial risk. Two product criteria are especially effective for achieving these goals: maintainability and measurable plan performance.

**Maintainability** is the ease with which an organisation can update its BCM plan as aspects of the organisation change. Think how often change happens within an organisation as people leave, are hired or promoted; as older technology is replaced with new; and as market factors dictate reprioritisation of the business. A BCM plan written with wordprocessing software and kept in a binder on a shelf may be simple to retrieve and easy to understand, but it is entirely unsuited for regular organisational change. The person or persons responsible for editing the BCM documentation first have to be made aware of a change, then locate every instance within the document that must be edited due to the change, determine whether the relationship between elements of the plan have been affected as a result, make the edits and then distribute the new version. A single significant change or a large number of smaller changes can have a huge effect on the document. For example, the closing or opening of a branch office may require hundreds of edits, especially if that office supports a critical business function. Compared with BCM software, building a plan using this approach will result in an operational loss, both in time and money. And the cost of maintaining the BCM documentation adds up quickly, particularly if the plan administrator has other business-focused responsibilities that are delayed or overlooked as a consequence.

On the other hand, the software model delivers a high degree of maintainability because it is built on a relational database. For instance, if a key person, one to whom the plan assigns multiple responsibilities, is replaced, the plan administrator needs only to update one record, and the entire plan is updated automatically. In this way, a relational database provides a one-to-one relationship between an instance of organisational change and a manual change within the plan. Any other impacts to the plan are propagated based on the built-in data relationships.


With all of the records and data required for the BCM plan in one location, the relational database also allows the plan administrator to easily replicate and modify real-world relationships among the plan elements. As a result, the plan administrator's time and effort is minimised, and the business scores a significant administrative gain.

BCM software delivers operational efficiency to the organisation in other ways, too. The software typically includes tools allowing the user to import large quantities of data and plan elements into the plan all at once, and to synchronise the database regularly with its source repositories to keep information updated. Efficient functionality like this can lead organisations to realise significant cost savings in BCM plan maintenance compared with the other alternatives.

The other overall benefit of BCM software—performance—is measured by how well or poorly the organisation executes an actual incident response and recovery process in comparison with the objectives and expectations set forth in the plan.

Even when a plan administrator has written a sound BCM plan with achievable recovery expectations, a static BCM plan document can only do so much. It might satisfy an audit, but a static document may not be securely accessible remotely, or be able to play an active role in restoring normal business operations when a disruptive incident occurs. It serves strictly as a reference. It is completely up to the people involved in the incident response to know the details of the current plan and to perform their roles accordingly, in priority order, using available resources. If those people are not already familiar with the plan, or if the plan is difficult to understand, or if it contains mistakes, or if the organisation has changed since the plan was written, there is a high probability of poor execution, which can result in very real business risk in delayed recovery, ruined customer relationships, lost revenue, or worse.

## Real-world Success



**SUNGARD** STATE OF MICHIGAN Customer Success Story

BRINGING RELIABILITY, RESILIENCY, AND RECOVERABILITY TO THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

**CHALLENGE:**  
Today, Michigan has 17 State agencies, 5 critical mainframes, over 4,000 servers, 6 petabytes of data, 50,000 employees, and 6000 applications. In 2003, Michigan recognized that with no comprehensive business continuity/disaster recovery (BC/DR) plan in place, they were in a state of high vulnerability from both natural and manmade disasters.

**SUNGARD SOLUTION:**  
By adopting a Business Continuity Framework and employing SunGard's Continuity Management Software (CMS) suite of products, the State of Michigan was able to develop a mature, comprehensive BC/DR solution: one that was so well-defined and detailed that it won the prestigious 2010 National Association of Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) award for Risk Management Initiatives.

Like businesses large and small do every day, the State of Michigan was challenged with mitigating the risk that a disaster might pose to its infrastructure. But with 17 state agencies, five critical mainframes, more than 4,000 servers, six petabytes of data, 50,000 employees, and 6,000 applications, overhauling the state's disaster recovery plans would be especially complex. A thorough research and analysis period led the State's business continuity and disaster recovery specialist to develop a comprehensive disaster recovery plan created with powerful industry-leading software. The plan was so well-built it won the 2010 National Association of Chief Information Officers award for Risk Management Initiatives.

[Download the case study.](#)

Properly-implemented BCM software, on the other hand, is much more powerful than a reference document. Well-designed BCM software interfaces contain features that allow the administrator to set up the BCM plan exactly as the organisation is structured from geographic, personnel, technology architecture and business standpoints. This kind of software will include step-by-step methodology and intuitive navigation that develops a BCM plan for the organisation based on best practices, current regulatory requirements, and the risks and vulnerabilities identified by the administrator. Detailed configurations are possible that automatically initiate the recovery process, including communications and resource identification. By programming virtually all of the recovery rules, decisions and actions into intelligent software, the organisation significantly reduces the cost of running and managing the plan in the event of a real incident.

**A static document ends up being more costly during the execution phase of a plan because there is a high degree of staff member involvement in correctly preparing, communicating, and managing the procedures laid out in the plan.**

Software-based BCM plans can also be tested efficiently. Unlike organisations that maintain a static BCM plan document, organisations with BCM software can rapidly prepare “what-if” scenarios and execute tests of the plan based on a simulated incident. Test results are typically available from BCM software solutions in multiple output formats including dashboards, test summaries or detailed reports. Executing a recovery test with a document-based BCM solution in place is much more expensive per test because staff members have to perform the tasks and communications that would otherwise be handled by the software.

The improved plan performance made possible by BCM software is about more than powerful functionality. The biggest business gains resulting from the implementation of this kind of software are realised when financial loss and downtime are reduced, or perhaps even avoided altogether, following an incident or disruption.

**The performance strength of a BCM software solution is a result of the breadth of the feature set offered and the configurability and customisation built into the program.**

A plan built with well-equipped BCM software handles its organisation’s recovery requirements with simplicity and accuracy. All risks and vulnerabilities have the proper mitigations designed and prioritised; all organisational elements stored within the database are correctly related to one another based on business impact; and all recovery tasks and communications are ready to be routed through the right channels to the right people based on their roles.

**Documenting BCM procedures on paper does not provide nearly this level of plan stability.**

The most functional and supportive BCM software applications are distinguished by several important features:

- Business impact analysis (BIA) questionnaires that can be sent to business users to uncover organisational risks and vulnerabilities
- Predefined recovery process templates that can serve as a framework for the organisation’s recovery plan
- Remote data entry, process configuration and automated review and approval capabilities to allow business users to build the portions of the plan specific to their expertise
- Support for effective collaboration between the plan administrator and the rest of the business
- A robust offering of dashboards, reports, alert notifications and other performance monitoring tools that alert stakeholders of plan status and items requiring attention or corrective action.

**These features make BCM software easy to understand and use, and help to ensure comprehensive and compliant plans.**

A reputable BCM software solution may also offer industry-specific products that include process templates sample documents and forms that organisations in industries like finance and healthcare can rely on to build plans compliant with industry-specific regulations.

Standard methodologies in a BCM solution can easily be made more “customised” within business units by refining details within steps or by adding additional steps to the process. But the more modifications the plan contains makes it less suited to the organisation because it becomes that much more difficult to update and change as the organisation changes.

The time and money an organisation spends on keeping a static document current is money not being spent on business-critical or revenue-generating activities. And in heavily regulated industries, the cost of including industry-specific best practices and compliance requirements continues to escalate, because the administrator must execute a global review of the business continuity plan every time regulations change, which they do frequently.

BCM software helps organisations master the challenging and time-consuming process of building a business continuity plan by automating analysis, plan creation, plan maintenance, and plan execution. When forced to create a business continuity plan as a static document, plan administrators and business users are limited in their ability to serve the organisation, the plan is at a much higher risk of containing errors or omissions, and the business risks the increased financial losses that result from a disorganised or delayed response to a business interruption or disaster. BCM software is an investment, but an investment that delivers a return in the form of lowered operational cost, more efficient use of employee time, assured regulatory compliance, and, following a business interruption, risks mitigated for customer retention and limited financial loss.