



PageOne Illuminating Business Continuity

Are your Business Continuity plans fit for purpose? – a White Paper

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Introduction

More than a third of London companies do not have a business continuity plan in place, despite the 7/7 bombings and recent security alerts.

Internal research conducted by PageOne suggests many organisations are still struggling to justify budget spend for Business Continuity Planning.

These findings are mirrored by a survey carried out by the London Chamber of Commerce which reveals that 41 per cent of businesses questioned lacked a contingency plan to counter the threat of a major crisis. Worryingly, 7/7 may not have been the 'wake up call' to businesses that many thought.

What can your business do to face up to this challenge? Resilient communications are a crucial part of any business continuity plan. When mobile phone networks were overwhelmed on 7/7, PageOne's SMS messaging proved itself a robust and reliable way for users to keep in touch and minimise disruption.

This White Paper invites businesses to take a close look at their communications strategy and decide whether it is fit for purpose in a crisis.

Making the case for Business Continuity

Everyone remembers where they were when they heard news of the 7/7 bombings; many organisations had direct experience of the events. These events set a new precedent for business owners and the public sector alike: how to keep operational under the most difficult and tragic circumstances.

Championing BC is not just about national emergencies; it's planning and maintaining effective communications at organisational, local and national level. Despite this, many organisations play lip service to a Business Continuity (BC) Plan, believing it won't happen to them. Key decision makers can view it as a cost to be minimised rather than a positive return on investment.

Convincing senior management of the need for a robust and reliable plan is key. Put simply, not having a plan in place can have a direct impact on an organisation's bottom line.

The only effective way to measure the value of your critical communications investment is to measure risk – the potential cost of not having critical communications in place.

BC as an insurance policy

A BC plan can be viewed as an insurance policy – you wouldn't stop paying your car insurance just because you think you may never have an accident. A good BC plan is more than just an insurance policy; it's an opportunity to ensure you can maintain business as usual without loss of income or reputation.

Keeping it simple and demonstrating best practice can convince even the most reluctant of financial controllers to invest.

Smaller organisations often put off new plans because of the fear of cost and disruption, but a plan doesn't have to be expensive and will pay dividends in a crisis. There is no need for expensive software development or hardware purchase, the simpler the plan the more likely it is to be adopted by staff and the senior management team.

About PageOne – tangible benefits

Improving communications also has a wider positive impact on an organisation. PageOne's experience is that an organisation will initially implement one of PageOne's messaging systems for the purpose of communicating critical information in a DR scenario. However, organisations soon find that the systems flexibility means that it can also be utilised in other areas of the business, to enhance communication, reduce costs and increase overall efficiency.

PageOne's critical messaging systems provide paging, SMS, voice and email distribution for all real time applications

The use of paging within a robust, multi-channel communication strategy was highlighted as one of the key lessons to be learnt from the events on July 7th.



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The advantage of a paging network is its ability to broadcast messages to many pagers simultaneously, combined with, better coverage and in-building penetration than mobile telephones. This makes the service suitable for high-reliability applications, such as those needed by the emergency services and other first responder organisations.

SMS messaging has become part of many organisations' communication plans. To help your business respond to the challenges, PageOne can show you how SMS messaging can be integrated into your existing systems. We can also explain how to use SMS within different departments, how to gain data and how to target specific groups.

Messages can be initiated via our 24/7 call centre, secure web accounts, SMS and even directly through automated software. Mass distribution of messages is possible, quickly and efficiently, to any combination of mobiles, pagers and email addresses, independent of network.

Incident co-ordinators are immediately informed when their message has been delivered, ensuring they can make informed decisions or escalate where necessary. Message delivery status reports and comprehensive message logs allow for post incident auditing and reporting.

Case study

International business travellers and their employers are keenly aware of the threat of terrorist activity. In response to this threat, one of the UK's leading business travel companies, Carlson Wagonlit, now relies on PageOne Connect to keep its clients aware of potential problems.

As a global company that organises business travel for the UK divisions of some of the world's biggest companies, including Shell, BP and The Royal Bank of Scotland Group, Carlson Wagonlit provides the complete travel package to its clients.

When a commercial aircraft went down off the West African coast in 2005, Carlson Wagonlit issued 2000 messages within minutes, telling clients that their staff were not involved.

How prepared are you?

Find out with our crisis checklist:

- Have you identified potential types of emergencies; what responses would be needed?
- Who is responsible for your BC plan?
- Do you have a BC team with specific responsibilities for specific people?
- How will incidents be reported?



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- What communication will you use?
- Do you have a number of BC communications options available, rather than relying on a single method?
- Do you test your plan by running trial exercises?
- Do you analyse and review your plan regularly?

If you answered 'no' to any of these points, why not get in touch with PageOne to find out how we can help meet your BC communication needs?

Summary

We live in an uncertain world. Although the risks of damaging external events may be slim, if the worst happens, good preparation is key.

That's why a robust emergency communications strategy is a vital component of every company's Business Continuity Plan.

It is therefore ironic that communication plans are normally the weakest link in a Business Continuity plan. The tendency is for organisations to over-rely on a single technology, such as mobile phones, landlines or email.

During the 7/7 bomb attacks on London, mobile phone networks were overwhelmed, but PageOne messaging continued to allow emergency teams to maintain communications.

Relying on email can be a problem if access to your facilities is blocked, for example by chemical spillage or a gas leak.

Whether clients are notifying rescue teams or organising mass evacuation, a rapid response is vital. That is why PageOne is trusted with mission-critical messaging used to deploy dedicated incident teams.

Multiple channels of communication, including SMS messaging, offer the best chances of maintaining contact in a crisis. PageOne messaging offers the highest levels of capacity, security and resilience.

Contact us

Don't wait for a crisis to find out your communications aren't up to scratch. Contact PageOne to find out how our technology can protect your business, simply call 0844 811 0080 or visit www.pageoneflare.com.