



Business Continuity Management System (BCMS)

What is a BCMS, and why should you have one?

A business continuity management system is an integrated collection of methods, procedures, and rules for ensuring that critical business processes can continue when emergencies or events resulting in damage occur.

The purpose of a BCMS is to identify critical business processes and devise necessary measures to reduce the likelihood of disruptions occurring, and to ensure that things get up and running again if they do.

The need to adopt a BCMS can result from various areas, but once implemented, it will provide the following benefits:

- Cut losses by preventing them
- Identify critical business processes and services
- Provide protection against unacceptable downtimes
- Prevent damage to image and reputation
- Fulfill compliance requirements
- Lower risk of liability
- Offer marketing and competitive advantages

Focus on availability

The key focus of the BCMS is the availability of the business processes, plus all the resources required for them, that are essential to the company and the achievement of its goals. In many cases, that means IT as a primary support process. However, every other business process also needs to resume operation in

line with its availability requirements and with the corresponding resources following an incident.

A BCMS should always take an integrated, process-oriented approach. A business impact analysis (BIA) is conducted to identify essential processes and resources based on the company's goals and value creation. The BIA consists of evaluating the processes and resources in terms of their availability requirements and then classifying their level of criticality.

Risk-based methodology

In connection with the company's critical processes and resources, risks are identified that may severely disrupt business operations. Various strategies are devised based on the results of the assessment of needs and risks. Strategies may involve measures for reducing the probability of occurrence or emergency planning. This way, the BCMS creates a valid and, above all, transparent and reproducible foundation for drawing up and implementing suitable measures and emergency plans.

Integrated approach as the key to success

An important part of the system is the interaction between management processes, business processes, and support processes. If an incident should occur, it must be ensured that these processes can resume and interact at a predefined level of operation. That is why the issue of BCM cannot be limited to individual areas such as IT and still achieve its goals.

Knowledge of critical processes and resources as well as the availability risk situation provide a solid foundation for attaining the desired level of availability.

Management systems as an iterative process

Setting up and running a BCMS is not just a one-time process. Instead, it is a process that is continuously repeated. It involves performing all regular activities such as business impact analyses, risk management, emergency testing, emergency exercises, and management reviews. Moreover, the BCMS processes, rules, and results undergo continual critical evaluation and, if need be, are adapted to produce needed improvement.

Cost-effectiveness through appropriate action

The structured coordination of activities and measures in a BCMS generally leads to a more economical solution to problems that occur. Preventive measures for lowering the probability of occurrence and emergency measures can be planned specifically and effectively. In the early stages of planning, the dependencies between processes and resources can be taken into account, while consideration is mainly given to suitable providers.

Emergency plans and preventive measures need to undergo appropriate testing on a regular basis to ensure their functionality. In addition, the employees involved also need to receive continuous training in their roles in the BCMS. That is the only way to ensure that everyone acts according to plan if an incident occurs.

Integrated management systems operation

A BCMS does not have to be developed and implemented as an isolated system. Instead, a BCMS can

be integrated into or based on existing management systems (e.g. QMS, ISMS), especially when they have also been set up in accordance with ISO standards. This helps leverage synergies as well as minimize or avoid redundancies. Additionally, there will be increased acceptance among employees since they won't have to be briefed separately on each system.

Proof of certification

A BCMS that conforms to the international ISO 22301:2013 standard can be certified by an accredited organization.

A certificate enables the company to provide third parties such as government authorities, auditors, customers, and partners with proof of compliance.

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- Gap analyses to determine current situation
- Analysis of existing BCMS
- Design, implementation, and operation of a BCMS based on the ISO 22301 and BSI 100-4 standards
- Performance of BIA and BCM risk assessments
- Coaching of business continuity managers
- Assistance with implementing and operating BCM software
- Project management and support in introducing integrated BCM solutions
- Quality assurance by certified experts during the project
- Assistance in devising testing and training concepts

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