

Business Continuity Management

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Introduction to BCM and preparing for H1N1

National BCM Programme

The National BCM programme was launched by SPRING Singapore in December 2008 to encourage early adoption of BCM by SMEs and to help businesses build resilience and capability for an effective response to disruptions. This five-year programme was implemented from 1 December 2008 onwards, where companies can tap on the S\$30 million government funding. Both SBF and SPRING Singapore will jointly drive this programme.

The National BCM programme follows the launch of the SS 540 – a new national standard on Business Continuity Management (BCM) by SPRING Singapore in October 2008, it aims to provide a framework and guidelines for companies to prepare themselves so as to minimise the impact of any disruptions and ensure business resilience.

SBF has been appointed as the key organization, and together with SPRING Singapore, SBF is driving this national initiative in the business community through working with industry partners to help members be more informed about BCM, leading to BCM readiness and certification.

In this capacity, SBF seeks to:

- a) Raise the awareness of the importance of BCM to businesses
- b) Increase the supply of BCM specialists that can support our enterprises to become BCM ready
- c) Make BCM more accessible to the business community
- d) Support enterprises' efforts to become BCM certified through an incentive programme (funded by SPRING)

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What is Business Continuity Management (BCM)?

The increasing threat of terrorism and disease pandemics are prompting businesses to maintain operational continuity in the face of such a crisis.

Companies are beginning to evaluate if they can safeguard and support their staff and customers, while, at the same time, implement solid continuity measures and recovery options to help them restore critical functions in the event of a business disruption.

All businesses must be able to safeguard their critical operations and ensure that their vital supply chains stay intact in the event of threats.

To be caught unaware or unprepared in managing potential disruptions to their operations could mean loss of business opportunities or even financial disaster, especially in the current volatile economic climate.

Businesses may also have to deal with the loss claims by affected customers consequently, not to mention a tarnished reputation and damaged goodwill.

Being BCM-ready also enables a company to reassure its internal and external stakeholders, customers and the market that its operations will be able to continue to meet the needs of the constituency that it serves and that it is prepared to deal with 'worst-case scenario' situations.

A BCM-ready private sector will help enhance Singapore's reputation as a Trusted Hub for reliable and quality service.

The preparedness for crises will collectively enhance the nation's resilience to crises.

BCM framework

BCM focuses on pre-incident analysis and prevention, as well as response planning to disruptions. These efforts require the integration of management, people, technology, facilities and business.

An effective BCM plan depends on continuous commitment of the organisation's efforts and resources, and systematic review to ensure it remains relevant. All staff must also be familiar with the

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plan and have the capability to contribute to its execution. BCM encompasses six areas:

- 1) Risk Analysis and Review
- 2) Business Impact Analysis
- 3) Strategy
- 4) Business Continuity Plan
- 5) Test and Exercise
- 6) Programme Management

BCM also incorporate the following components in a matrix format:

- 1) Policies
- 2) Processes
- 3) People
- 4) Infrastructure

With this underlying matrix, companies are able to identify gaps through their day-to-day operations.

SS 540: 2008

Singapore Standard SS 540: 2008 was launched at the Standards eXchange organised by SPRING Singapore in October 2008. This standard provides a framework and guidelines for companies to prepare themselves so as to minimise the impact of any disruptions and ensure business resilience.

As a revision of the Technical Reference (TR) 19 after just two years in the market, SS 540 incorporates the “Plan-Do-Check-Act” (PDCA) methodology that is also used in the ISO 9001. This enhances the implementation of BCM.

The SS 540 can also help companies minimise the potential damage to their business and give greater assurance and confidence to their business partners.

This will strengthen competitiveness and boost Singapore’s image as a preferred business hub in Asia.

Regardless of their industry or size, SS 540 is applicable to all companies. It serves as an effective and structured management system that can be integrated with other management requirements in the organisation.

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Companies can include their business concerns e.g. quality, safety, security and other management systems for a more comprehensive BCM plan.

BCM guide to compact flu pandemic

No one can predict when a flu pandemic will occur. In the event that it does occur, the consequences and business impact may be felt in a number of ways and the severity may vary over time. A flu pandemic could impact your business in the following ways:

- Supplies may be disrupted.
- The number of customers may drop, especially for businesses in the service sector catering to the public.
- Likely increase in electronic communications, e.g. phone calls, email and internet use. Communication systems and company call centres may be overloaded.
- An estimated 25% of staff in any organisation may be absent from work.

Given the likely impact, small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) are encouraged to start planning now to ensure that their businesses remain viable in the event of an outbreak. SMEs should consider how to:

- a) Operate with minimal face-to-face contact between staff, between staff and customers, and with suppliers.
- b) Operate effectively if key staff are absent from work.
- c) Operate if supply chains are disrupted.

Yellow alert

- Slight human-to-human transmission. Small risk of it being imported here, but has not resulted in sustained spread.
- Travelling to and from affected areas may be restricted.
- Companies to start briefing staff on business continuity plan.
- Appoint a flu manager.
- Monitor developments in affected areas and implement policy on overseas travel and recall of staff from affected areas.
- Screen staff who visited affected areas in preceding 7 days.
- Follow any vaccines and medication advisories issued by MOH.
- Issue thermometers, disposable gloves, surgical masks and N-95 masks.
- Plan for local housing for workers who commute from outside Singapore.

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- Plan separate housing arrangements for new or existing foreign workers returning from affected countries for a period of 7 days to minimise contact with existing employees.
- Consider succession planning for key staff.
- Consider counseling support arrangements and resources.
- Monitor developments in affected areas. Update plan on how / when to activate:
 - a) Alternative suppliers.
 - b) Alternative delivery means to customers.
 - c) Systems and facilities for working from alternative site or working remotely.

Orange alert

- Evolves into human disease. WHO confirms several outbreaks in one country, spreading to other countries.
- Deaths expected. Local confirmation of new cases and evidence of more than one transmission.
- The public starts to avoid crowded areas.
- Business travelers, tourists to Singapore decrease or postpone their trips.
- Companies start temperature taking and other BCP measures.
- Our airport and points of entry start temperature screening of overseas visitors.
- Update staff regularly on health advisories issued by the Ministry of Health.
- Separate key staff into two teams and ensure minimal contact between both teams.
- Encourage staff to stay home if unwell and monitor status.
- Activate separate housing arrangements for new or existing foreign workers returning from affected countries for 7 days to minimize contact with existing employees.
- Pre-qualify alternative suppliers from unaffected areas. If no alternative supplier is available, increase inventory levels.
- Activate processes and systems to support remote access for staff to interact with customers and suppliers.
- Clean and disinfect common areas more frequently, include more frequent cleaning of air-conditioning system.
- Activate agreements with cleaning /decontamination contractors.
- Institute temperature taking and contact tracing for visitors.
- Prevent visitors with flu-like symptoms from entering workplace.
- Activate alternative delivery arrangements with suppliers and customers.
- Explore partnership agreements with fellow industry players for reciprocal shipments of finished goods to customers Internal and External Communications.

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- Inform external parties of restriction on visits to company's premises.
- Update relevant customers / suppliers / shareholders if some employees quarantined. This will help to ensure confidence in the continuity of your business.
- Inform suppliers and customers of alternative procedures for pickup / deliveries.

Roles of Flu Manager (for Yellow alert)

1. Actively monitor alert levels and work with management on message to staff in the event of a change in alert level.
2. Educate staff on the disease and the mode of transmission. Brief them on the need for infection control measures and the preventive procedures that have been set in place. Educate staff on the different types of thermometers, such as oral and ear thermometer, and the proper way of using them.
3. Collate contact information of all staff i.e. home address/home telephone number / mobile phone number. Make sure all staff has contact numbers of flu manager/assistant flu manager. Staffs are to contact flu manager if they are admitted to hospital with suspected pandemic flu, for contact tracing purposes.
4. Check <http://www.flu.gov.sg>, <http://www.moh.gov.sg> daily for updated advisories (e.g. travel advisories) and update staff accordingly.
5. Ensure that staff who have travelled to affected areas are home quarantined for a sufficient number of days (to be advised by the Ministry of Health). Check on staff's health by phone or email during his/her absence from work.
6. Appoint staff to keep quarantined staff informed of events in office.
7. Ensure that the workplace has adequate supplies of tissue paper / hand towels, disinfectants and masks.
8. Brief staff on personal hygiene measures:
 - a) Do not spit on the floor
 - b) Wash hands
 - c) Sneezing and coughing should be done into tissue paper which should be carefully disposed of
 - d) Avoid sharing of cups, cutlery, etc
 - e) Avoid physical contact like shaking hands

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9. Put up notices in washrooms on proper hand washing.
10. Ensure common areas e.g. pantries, washrooms, meeting rooms are disinfected daily. Liaise with cleaning staff/contractors on this.
11. Identify a room/area in the office as the isolation room/area for staff with fever with nearby toilet facility, which is designated for his/her use. Identify the isolation route (not commonly used by staff/visitors) that leads to an area where the staff with fever can be brought to the hospital/clinic.
12. Identify hospital /clinics that staff with fever can be brought to.
13. At Alert Orange: Identify staff with fever through temperature monitoring. Ensure staff measures their temperature twice daily.

To view full article, please see:

http://www.moh.gov.sg/mohcorp/uploadedFiles/News/Current_Issues/2007/Flu_Pandemic_Business_Continuity_Guide_24June2009.pdf

Survey on pandemic planning

From 30 April to 6 May, ORC Worldwide conducted a survey into business response to the spread of the Influenza A H1N1 virus, specifically focusing on four areas:

- ✓ Business-related travel
- ✓ Post-travel-related actions
- ✓ Infection control and health protection
- ✓ Emergency evacuations of expatriates in affected areas

Here are some key findings from the survey:

- 84 percent of companies reported having some type of business continuity or pandemic preparedness plan.
- Fewer than one-third of respondents reported currently engaging in employee screening, with slightly fewer currently engaging in some type of screening of visitors or contractors.
- Less than 10 percent of companies responding report handling packages from affected areas in a different fashion than packages from non-affected areas.

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- Around 55 percent of responding companies implemented some changes to business travel practices as a result of the outbreak.
- Only 37 percent of the companies had implemented mandatory quarantine periods following travel to locations with confirmed cases of H1N1 virus with 58 percent of the respondents reporting that these quarantine periods are from five to 10 days in length.
- Of those companies reporting mandatory quarantine periods, slightly less than half (43.9 percent) allowed employees to return to work without any medical screening.

SBF survey on BCM

In conjunction with the Briefing on Influenza A (H1N1–2009) & Business Continuity Management on 11 May, SBF conducted a survey from 8 to 12 May 2009 to seek members' feedback on their awareness of Business Continuity Management (BCM) and whether they have any Business Continuity Plan (BCP) in place.

A total of 328 responses, representing the cross section of companies in the various industries were received. The following is a summary of key findings:

Awareness of Business Continuity Management

A majority of the respondents (84.8%) indicated that they are aware of BCM. Only 15.2% indicated otherwise.

Business Continuity Plan

Close to half of the respondents (49.4%) indicated that they have a Business Continuity Plan in place. 22.3% indicated that they do not have any BCP in place while another 13.1% indicated that they have the intention to develop one.

Reasons for not having BCP

- Lack of knowledge, expertise to develop / maintain BCP (45.8%).
- Too costly to develop and maintain BCP (13.9%)
- Unaware of BCP (12.5%)
- Do not see need (9.7%) and lack of management support (4.2%)

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Assistance require to develop and maintain a BCP

- Professional advice on how to get started.
- Require knowledge and expertise on BCM and BCP.
- Government assistance to provide updated and relevant information.
- Government funding/subsidy for BCP implementation.
- Availability of more information on BCM and BCP for companies.
- External assistance from other stakeholders e.g. help from building management to provide isolation room in the event of a flu pandemic etc.
- A guideline for companies' reference.
- Case studies of companies with successful BCP in place for benchmarking.
- Implementation of BCP must not be too costly.

Other Useful Resources

Singapore Business Federation (新加坡工商联合总会)

www.sbf.org.sg

As the apex business chamber, the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) champions the interests of the business community in Singapore, in trade, investment and industrial relations. Nationally, SBF acts as the bridge between the government and businesses in Singapore to create a conducive business environment. Internationally, SBF represents the business community in bilateral, regional and multilateral fora for the purpose of trade expansion and business networking.

SPRING Singapore

<http://www.spring.gov.sg>

Singapore's main enterprise development agency for growing innovative companies and fostering a competitive SME sector. Works with partners to help enterprises in financing, capabilities and management development, technology and innovation, and access to markets. As the national standards and accreditation body, SPRING develops and promotes internationally-recognised standards and quality assurance in the implementation of BCM to enhance competitiveness and facilitate trade.

Fight The Pandemic Flu: Influenza A (H1N1-2009)

[http://www.moh.gov.sg/mohcorp/uploadedFiles/Web_Parts/Home/InfluenzaA\(H1N1\)_English.pdf](http://www.moh.gov.sg/mohcorp/uploadedFiles/Web_Parts/Home/InfluenzaA(H1N1)_English.pdf)

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Influenza Pandemic Preparedness: guide on infection control measures on workplace

http://www.moh.gov.sg/mohcorp/uploadedFiles/News/Current_Issues/2007/Infection%20Ctrl%20Guide_Main%20Document_May07.pdf

Health Advisory on Influenza A (H1N1-2009) for workplaces

http://www.moh.gov.sg/mohcorp/uploadedFiles/Web_Parts/Home/Workplace%20Advisory_6%20May%2009.pdf

Tripartite Advisory on Workplace Measures to Tackle Influenza A (H1N1-2009)

http://www.mom.gov.sg/publish/momportal/en/press_room/press_releases/2009/20090430-Tripartite_Advisory_on_Workplace_Measures_to_Tackle_Influenza_A_H1N1-2009.html

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<http://www.spring.gov.sg/Content/ModulePage.aspx?group=nw&iid=0213e076-ccc9-4c30-9e79-c3dfffbedc6a>

Factiva (NLB database)