

Lessons Learned

The following, “Lessons Learned” document is not intended to be a recommendation from or to the industry, it is simply a collection of individual observations and experiences of those who were involved in ensuring business continuity at their individual firms who were confronting vastly different circumstances. Each of the items listed below represents the input of an individual firm. Many firms submitted input.

• Assembly/Command Center	• Consider having a second tier of assembly sites and command centers farther out to address regional outages.
• Assembly/Command Center	• Consider having a formal command center and meet regularly.
• Assembly/Command Center	• Consider the value of initiating regular conference calls and naming participants for all businesses, regions, support areas and corporate communications.
• Assembly/Command Center	• Consider creating an open issues list and assigning responsibilities.
• Assembly/Command Center	• Consider an escalation process.
• Assembly/Command Center	• Consider create a senior management decision making body with representation from all divisions.
• Awareness	• Review awareness of evacuation procedures and assembly points among all employees. Consider having direct meetings rather than distributing material.
• Communication	• Review Well-maintained and available phone trees are essential for the accounting of employees.
• Communications	• Consider treating eMail and voicemail as vital business systems.
• Communications	• Consider updating and testing call trees/notification procedures regularly.
• Communications	• Consider forming a communication team to address staff, clients, media, etc.
• Communications	• Consider having regular status meetings disseminating information out using publicized phone numbers and websites.
• Communications	• Consider distribution of wallet cards to all staff.
• Communications	• Consider having alternate ways to communicate, e.g., cell phone, pagers, Blackberries, web, e-mail, automated callout system, voicemail broadcasts, broadcast e-mail, toll-free hotline (automated and ‘live person’), etc.
• Communications	• Consider implementing a ‘dark’ website that is only available at the time of a disaster, which would allow employees to log in from any Internet device. Staff could update their status as well as

	receive information about the situation.
• Communications	• Consider daily communications to keep customers up-to-date via phone, wires.
• Communications	• Consider establishing a place to publish temporary phone numbers and locations of relocated staff.
• Communications	• Coordinate any public statements whether written or live.
• Insurance	• Consider establishing procedures for recording and tracking expenses and claims related to the occurrence (s).
• Interdependencies	• Consider pre-establish key relationships and contacts, e.g., local government, state and federal agencies, vendors, regulators, industry groups (SIA, etc.), industry peers, etc., at all levels. Have call trees for these contacts.
• Interdependencies	• Consider regular reviews of continuity programs employed by 3 rd party vendors, including participation in tests.
• Interdependencies	• Consider leveraging vendor relationships through either parent organization or other sources (e.g., clients) to provide necessary services and equipment.
• Interdependencies	• Consider alternate counter-parties and other relationships.
• Interdependencies	• Consider potential single points of failure beyond your own shop including: gas, electric, etc. These companies may provide documentation on how your company connects to the outside world (and vice versa).
• Life/Safety	• Review protocols for nuclear/biological/chemical threats.
• Life/Safety	• Review frequency of fire drills and evacuation drills including addressing physically challenged staff.
• Life/Safety	• Consider training fire safety wardens for ‘non-fire’ events.
• Life/Safety	• Consider the need to pre-position emergency supplies for staff.
• Life/Safety	• Review procedures for multi-tenant versus wholly owned/leased facilities.
• People	• Consider planning for human considerations, such as: life/safety, evacuation procedures, grief counseling, personnel tracking, temporary housing, and family assistance, etc.
• People	• Consider that a high priority is to protect staff. Also consider employees outside of the affected region and travelers.
• People	• Consider employee succession planning.
• People	• Consider assigning HR and facilities reps. to assist employees during the recovery period.
• People	• Consider leveraging non-critical staff to backfill and support critical staff.
• People	• Consider food, clothing and lodging as well as HVAC and additional security where necessary for affected personnel and those working extended hours in support of the recovery.

• Plan	• Review reciprocal space for desktop readiness.
• Plan	• Review documented plans and strategies.
• Plan	• Review plans for flexible and multiple strategies.
• Plan	• Review contingency plans for all support and service groups, i.e., food services, mail services, transportation, reprographic services.
• Plan	• Consider having simple, easy to execute plans which may be more effective.
• Plan	• Consider having listings of all key contact information (client related, regulators, service providers, etc.).
• Plan	• Consider remote alternate sites for all critical applications (including databases) which also needs to be thoroughly documented.
• Plan	• Consider having clear roles and responsibilities.
• Plan	• Consider use of strategically placed, pre-determined hotels for alternate work locations.
• Plan	• Consider keeping any recovery alternatives and procedures that were developed on the fly during the recovery process.
• Scenario	• Consider planning for events of various degrees of magnitude, up and down the scale.
• Scenario	• In a larger event, consider these and other possible aftershocks: limited access to the affected area, bomb threats, gas leaks, poor air quality, structural integrity concerns, network problems, loss of electricity, degradation of phone service, intermittent outages.
• Strategy	• Consider ways to ramp up capacity as fast as possible.
• Strategy	• Consider separating technology and business centers in production.
• Strategy	• Consider the distance staff travels to the recovery location.
• Strategy	• Consider moving business to alternate geographies, both at time of disaster and as part of regular business.
• Strategy	• Consider recovery time for events that have both you and others out of business as well as those that only have your company out of business.
• Strategy	• Consider the need for a contingency plan for your contingency plan once your original plan goes into affect.
• Strategy	• Consider developing “partnership” arrangements with domestic and overseas offices.
• Strategy	• Consider establishing multiple production facilities so that if one site is effected, the other remains

	up. For example, take a line of business (or business function) and split staff supporting this business into two separate facilities.
• Strategy	• Consider storing tape and archive data at a remote site outside of the region.
• Strategy	• Consider the need for more cross-organizational and firm wide planning and setting of recovery priorities at a firm wide level.
• Strategy	• Evaluate the need to build a firm wide program to show the “displaceable space” that would be secured for the recovery of most critical functions of the company in another major event.
• Strategy	• Consider diversification of DR sites (people may not be able to get to one place).
• Strategy	• Re-evaluate business demand for “business as usual” capacity as opposed to critical function only.
• Strategy	• Consider the possible length of the outage and plan for possibly prolonged dislocation scenarios.
• Strategy	• Consider planning and managing across entirety of parent company.
• Technology	• Examine your voice recovery plan.
• Technology	• Consider having technologists onsite to expedite recovery.
• Technology	• Evaluate single points of failure in voice and data networks.
• Technology	• Consider having pre-existing contracts with quick-ship hardware vendors.
• Technology	• Consider maintaining an inventory of all applications and infrastructure technologies by building.
• Technology	• Consider a ‘Standard Operating Environment’ which allows employees to be immediately productive from any workstation.
• Technology	• Evaluate expanded usage of VPN remote access tools.
• Technology	• Consider documenting system relationships and dependencies.
• Technology	• Evaluate call forwarding requirements for the disaster recovery site.
• Technology	• Review network bandwidth with the DR scenarios.
• Testing	• Consider the viability of pre-testing of alternate site configurations in order to recover within the timeframes provided/required.
• Transport	• Review alternate means of transportation to DR site.
• Transport	• Consider backup transportation plans with pre-existing supporting contracts with bus and ferry services.