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# **Business Continuity**

FOR  
**DUMMIES®**

## **Learn to:**

- Identify the risks to your business
- Create your own business continuity plan
- Make your business more resilient
- Act swiftly and effectively if disruption hits

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**SAMPLE CHAPTER**

## Chapter 3

# Achieving Rapid Results and Quick Wins

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Assessing the resilience of your business
  - ▶ Making immediate progress with the 'Seven Ps'
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**H**uman nature dictates that you believe your business to be more resilient than it actually is. And because staff members take their lead from you, when you give them the impression that all is hunky-dory, they aren't going to be alert to risks. The buck stops with a firm's owner as regards business survival, and if you always do what you've always done, you always get what you always got . . . which means that lightning – metaphorically – can strike in the same place twice, or even three, four or five times.

So you want to begin introducing business continuity (BC) in your organisation without delay. For this reason, we design this chapter to get you off to a flying start by offering a host of inexpensive and simple ways to begin building resilience quickly within your business.

This chapter describes some straightforward measures that don't take long or cost much, but do encourage the resilience of your business. We take you through some great tips and quick wins – under an easy-to-remember framework of the 'Seven Ps' covering everything from People and Premises to Publicity and Public Infrastructure. Although following the tips in this chapter doesn't mean that your business has full BC in place, these actions can make a big difference when you need help the most.

## *Giving Your Business a Resilience Health Check with The Seven Ps*

Approaching something as large as building resilience in your whole business can raise the question: 'Where on earth do I start?' Well, to help you we split

the simple tips in this chapter into seven useful areas that influence or form part of your business:

- ✓ **People:** HR and skills.
- ✓ **Premises:** Property/locations.
- ✓ **Processes and information technology (IT):** Activity/functions/technology.
- ✓ **Priorities:** Your customers and suppliers.
- ✓ **Publicity:** Internal and external communications.
- ✓ **Public infrastructure:** Local authority, environment and community.
- ✓ **Phone numbers:** From your nearest and dearest to emergency experts.

The precise way in which you use this chapter is up to you. You can start where you like, leave and come back when you choose, or work through each list in turn and in doing so give your business a bit of a resilience health check.

The lists in this chapter contain inexpensive actions that you really need to take and precautions you need to have in place. Although not as comprehensive as a car MOT, by developing a few simple ideas your business can become resilience roadworthy. The quick wins in this chapter are all about implementing now some basic things that can make a big difference later on.



TIP

You can use the lists in this chapter as checklists and tick off each item as you complete it. Or simply cross out the aspects that aren't relevant to your firm. Those that do apply are simple to use and cost little or nothing. All the tips get you thinking about the sort of things that you could do to make your business more resilient.



AHEAD OF THE GAME

A good early quick win is to look only at the components of your organisation that we describe in this section in the context of your business's *critical activities*: the things that you have to perform in order to deliver your most important products and services. These activities enable your business to meet its most important and time-critical objectives that you can't manage without. We look into critical activities in more detail in Chapter 4.

## People: Keeping Staff Members Safe and Accounted For

Your staff members aren't called your business's human resources for nothing. Their training, skills and expertise are the supporting backbone of your firm. In this section what cover some initial measures that you can take to protect and look after them:



✔ **Produce an emergency contacts sheet.** Include telephone numbers and contact names for all the people you need to speak to in an emergency.

To help compile this information, imagine that you've just received a call on a Sunday night from the fire brigade telling you that your firm's building has been caught in a fire and razed to the ground. The question to ask is: 'Who ya gonna call?'

We show a simple example of a contacts sheet in Figure 3-1.

<b>Management Team</b>			
Maureen Bonn	General Manager	0207 568 7895	07986 8
John Ansell	Operation Manager	0207 687 7865	07272 8
Peter Wright	Quality Manager	0118 789 8383	07777 8
Geoff Winfield	Head of Sales	01987 839622	07898 9
Matthew Chris	Finance Director	0211 3873 933	07902 9
<b>Production Team</b>			
Steve Creed	Shift Manager	0218 221 2247	0754
<b>Warehouse</b>			
Pauline Barclay	Cambridge	0208 215 8963	07
Jim Spriggs	Doncaster	01398 454457	
<b>Maintenance</b>			
Willie Johnson	Production	0208 456974	
Tim Squires	General Duties	0258 46846	
<b>Key Suppliers</b>			
Cogs and Turns Ltd	Jim Reeve (Sales)	0800	
	Peter Windrush (Ops)	018	
Trim and Bumper Ltd	Angela Main (GM)	02	
	Pete Connolly (Ops)		
Oil and Grease Plc	Colin Candahour (Sales)		
	Margaret Timms (Ops)		
<b>Key Customers</b>			
Oxbox auto	Janet		

**Figure 3-1:**  
A simple  
contacts  
sheet.



The contact information needs to be simple and done on a spreadsheet (as in Figure 3-1) or by hand. Emergency contact names and numbers change frequently, which causes expense and difficulty in printing updated cards. Mobile phones are useful for storing numbers; even without a signal, the numbers are still available.

Another useful tip is to list numbers and other information that doesn't change on a thin piece of card that you fold in a zigzag shape down to credit card size and keep in a wallet or purse. You can keep staff up to date with changes through text messages or 'V' cards – such as electronic business cards adapted for this purpose.

The key points to remember when you're finished with your contacts sheet are:

- Give a copy to all members of staff who may find it helpful.
- Print off hard copies, in case an emergency affects your IT.
- Ensure that you have a copy easily accessible and, most importantly, in a safe place off-site.
- Make sure that the sheet is updated regularly; a good approach is to make updating the contacts sheet part of someone's role and link it to that person's appraisal objectives.
- Emphasise to staff the importance of keeping this information safe.

- ✓ **Account for your staff and visitors.** Create and maintain an in/out register at reception that you can carry during an evacuation and use to ensure that everyone's safely outside.

If you have a large workforce or members of the general public are inside your premises, pass a pen and a pad around during an evacuation for everyone to write down their names and a person (and telephone number) to contact on their behalf. Doing so confirms people's safety to the emergency services and gives you the details to reassure invariably concerned relatives who may try to call them, you or the emergency services to check people are okay. Having a list helps prevent any confusion, reduce anxiety and cut down the number of unnecessary phone calls.

- ✓ **Create a set of roles and responsibilities.** Communicate it to all staff detailing who'll take control of an incident and who'll step in if that person is absent.
- ✓ **Set up a skills register.** You and your staff may have skills, such as languages, first aid, accountancy qualifications and IT or DIY skills, that aren't always apparent until you ask. These abilities can become really useful at a time of disruption. Also, consider maintaining contact with staff who retire by offering to pay them a monthly retainer and refresher



training, so that in the event of a disruption you have additional resources to call upon.

Make sure that your insurance covers retired or temporary staff while they're working for you (read more about insurance in Chapter 16).

- ✓ **Cross-train and multi-skill-train your staff.** You want your staff to be able to replace or reinforce each other (plus multi-training adds a bit of variety, which is of course the spice of life; and you thought this was going to be dull!).

Why not make the cross-training a topsy-turvy day in which people do each other's roles? Doing so may well uncover single points of failure you didn't know you had. You may even be a single point of failure yourself, and so ask yourself: 'What happens if I'm away or caught up in the incident itself?' Managers and owners aren't exempt from being the cause of problems!

- ✓ **Create an emergency number for staff to call.** The most cost-effective way to do this is to buy a pay-as-you-go mobile and follow these steps. Before an incident:

- Give staff the number in advance and ask them to call it in an emergency and listen for instructions.

Explain that during an emergency they need to call the number regularly because you'll endeavour to update the message on the hour.

- Test the number at least once a month.
- Keep the mobile telephone off-site, or have two: one off- and one on-site.

At the time of an emergency:

- Record a voicemail message that provides the information you need to give.
- Test it.
- Ensure all calls are diverted to this recorded voicemail.

By recording a message in this way, callers can listen to the message, which you can update regularly on the hour every hour. Therefore you can brief many people at the same time without having to call each person individually.

- ✓ **Have hand sanitisers ready for use during a flu epidemic or pandemic.** In the 2009 flu pandemic, retail stocks ran down very quickly and suppliers were unable to meet rising demand. The upshot was that businesses were unable to provide a low-cost way to avoid the spread of germs and help prevent their staff getting the virus.

## Premises and Assets: Preparing and Taking Precautions

This section contains some easy measures to take to protect your business buildings (and the people inside them) and keep your assets safe:



- ✓ **Plan the evacuation of your building.** Consider how you're going to evacuate the building and how you can ensure that everyone gets out safely, taking into consideration those with less mobility. Plan where you're going to evacuate to and assemble.

Now, imagine that the exit you intend to use is blocked and the congregation area you select is cordoned off. Plan your contingency arrangements to deal with these problems. Also consider:

- **Your way of alerting people to an evacuation.** Shouting or blowing a whistle may be the quickest and easiest method. But make sure that staff are aware of the plans in advance and that you test them . . . while you have the chance. An evacuation situation is not one where you want to be relying on lessons learned for the next time during a real event. You need an effective way of communicating to people.
- **Your routes of escape.** Even if you or staff members are working from home, ensure that you can open an upstairs window and throw a mattress out to soften your landing, in case you have to climb out, hang from the window ledge and drop onto the mattress. In an office you can test the effectiveness of your safe route by timing you and your team.



Panic and other potential difficulties, such as heat and smoke, mean that these tasks may well take two or three times longer in a real-life situation than during a test scenario. If appropriate, mark exit routes along walls or on the floor.

- **How you or your staff are going to dial 999.** If everyone makes it safely out of the building but nobody has a mobile phone, or no signal is available, where are you going to go to raise the alarm? Check for premises nearby and public call boxes.

- ✓ **Consider 'invacuation' (taking shelter where you are).** *Invacuation* is a relatively new word and pretty much means remain where you are, identify the safest place to be and stay inside. This place may be the cupboard under the stairs if you work from home or the core of the building in offices.



Basements and cellars are often cited as being the best place (if you have one and flooding isn't a problem), but check that you can get a mobile phone signal to notify people that you're safe and whether the basement is big enough for everyone to fit into.

Write a list of what you'd want in the basement if you had to stay for a couple of hours and then get these items in. Although situations in which you and your staff need to evacuate may be uncommon, they do occur – for example, during bomb threats or following a contamination – so this precaution is worth taking.

- ✓ **Identify muster points, assembly areas and take care of immediate business.** Of course you need to identify and communicate where everyone should meet up outside – such as the car park or the end of the road – to carry out a roll-call. But in addition to this initial muster point, for more prolonged periods, think of alternatives such as a cafe, pub or hotel that would be more comfortable. Wherever this alternative is, perform a roll-call of all who were in the building, remembering to account for any staff and visitors, and let the police know if anyone's missing.

Later you could meet at your home or look to have a reciprocal agreement with another business premises to plan things in the immediate term. As time ticks by and minutes appear about to turn to hours, you need to keep your business activities going. Here are the key considerations connected to your temporary, alternative place of working:

- Does this place have Internet access?
- Do you have means of accessing the Internet, such as a laptop?
- Do you know what business needs to be done today, such as orders that need to be dispatched or invoices that need to be sent out?
- Can you get access to files through the Internet; for example, through *cloud computing*, where your business can hire storage areas held on remote machines to keep files and software applications, which means you can access files wherever you have a computer with an Internet connection.

If you realise when asking these questions that your business would be unable to carry on without access to your permanent site, consider how you can store information so that you can access it away from the office. Store any company property and information securely, such as in a box with a numerical padlock to which only relevant members of the firm know the code.

- ✓ **Don't dispose of old equipment unless you have to.** This particularly applies to specialist equipment that your business has replaced with newer items. Reconditioning the old equipment is worthwhile (if the cost is acceptable); hold it in reserve at another location or in storage.



Even common equipment such as printers and fax machines, if they're still working, is worth keeping as a standby along with ink cartridges. In the case of reusing old computer equipment, ensure that your IT team fixes them up regularly and downloads all relevant software patches.

- ✓ **Take digital photos of your office.** This way you have evidence of what it looked like before it was burned down, ransacked, flooded or contaminated with toxic waste. The photos are useful for insurance purposes and to jog memories about what's lost.
- ✓ **Identify any localised risks to your business premises.** Who are your neighbours and what do they do? Carry out a quick search online against your postcode to see who works close by and the type of businesses they run. Take five minutes to walk around your local area, looking to see who does what and where. Think about potential risks within the environment or associated with the business; a business doesn't have to be a multi-national petrol chemical plant to hold hazardous or inflammable substances.

Ask yourself: if something happened here, would my business's

- Premises be affected (for example, from fire or fallout)?
- Buildings still be accessible?
- Stocks become contaminated with no contingency stocks available?

- ✓ **Make arrangements for a backup location.** Use your local business network to find an alternative location for use during a crisis or disruption until recovery allows you back into your premises. The most cost-effective way is to find a business with spare capacity, within a similar sector to yours, in an adjoining district (near, but not too near) and not in direct competition with you. Speak with the owner about putting in place a reciprocal arrangement whereby in the event of a disruption your staff can work from those premises to carry out your firm's critical business functions.

Serviced offices are another option. Provided the information and communication technology (ICT) is covered, a business can be up and running in hours. Some services provide access to PCs, printers and faxes at a moment's notice. Cloud servers make an ideal alternative to physical storage and are likely to work out less expensive than buying backup hardware.

- ✓ **Find an alternative location that can receive your deliveries.** So you've had a disruption and can't get access to your site. All's still well, however, because your staff are carrying out critical activities (taking orders, sending out invoices and so on) at a pre-arranged backup location. The trouble is that you need to receive some more goods and you have nowhere to receive them. In this situation, find a local warehousing firm

that has suitable accommodation for your goods (dry, correct ambient temperature and so on). Ensure that the firm is likely to be able to receive a short-notice call to receive goods. Alternatively, use your business contacts to work out who you'd call in the event of needing some short-term space. Arrange this now and you've one less thing to worry about if the time comes.

- ✔ **Contact a local vehicle hire company.** You need a vehicle, suitable for your business needs, and delivered to your door. If your business relies on a van to deliver goods, find a local rental firm that can replace it if yours is stolen or involved in an accident. An alternative is to use a reciprocal arrangement with another business or arrange to borrow a vehicle from friends or family.

In this latter case, make sure that you have the appropriate insurances in place.

## *Processes and IT: Keeping Data Safe and Your Business Trading*

In this section we provide some useful advice relating to computing and technical system processes, and we also describe a few simple measures for keeping your general business processes up and running.

To protect that most valuable but intangible resource – your business data – here are a few tips:

- ✔ **Copy your data regularly onto a memory stick, DVD, portable hard-disk drive or backup tape and take it off-site.** Whatever option you choose, test it to make sure that you can retrieve all the files on another PC.

One of the most common mistakes that a business makes is conscientiously backing up its data every day, but not checking that the backup is working and that staff can retrieve the data when necessary. You don't want to discover this problem during an incident. Also make sure that another person has permission and access to get to the backup files so that in your absence someone else can restore your data or recover a lost file.

- ✔ **Print off copies of documents that you can't afford to lose.** Invest in storing important paper copies off-site or scan documents and hold them electronically on a memory stick that you can easily access.
- ✔ **Prioritise your electronic files so you can back up and protect the most important ones.** Do the same with your company's documents: scan them in and save them so they're backed-up off-site.

WARNING!





- ✓ **Train someone to navigate your data.** In an emergency, that person needs to be able to find the files that you need urgently.
- ✓ **Establish levels of authority.** Ensure that support companies, particularly IT, finance and other key departments, have a chain of command set up. No point having someone authorised to make important departmental decisions if that person's on holiday when an important decision needs to be made.
- ✓ **Create an asset register of your hardware, with photographs of each item.** See whether your accounting software has a built-in asset register for depreciation of more expensive and durable items.
- ✓ **Design a user policy.** Explain the dangers of information security to your information (and IT) users. This policy can be as simple as not downloading anything from the Internet and not opening attachments from unknown sources. Choose the best option for your firm based on your staff and business culture.
- ✓ **Remember the impact that social media can have during an incident.** Ensure that staff members are familiar with the rules and make sure that your user policy (see the preceding bullet point) includes references to how employees should be cautious of what they publish on their social media accounts. Inappropriate messages can have a detrimental effect on your organisation and its reputation.
- ✓ **Keep servers and other crucial bits of equipment out of the basement if any chance exists that it may flood.** The basement is a tempting place to store these sorts of items and in some cases can be a good solution, but a possibility of flooding means the risk that you have to carry wet equipment upstairs in a hurry. Best to move any equipment now in your own time, while it (and you) are dry.

In the following list, we give you some easy ideas for keeping your business processes up and running in an emergency:

- ✓ **Identify your business's main profit-earning product or service.** Consider carefully all the processes that need to happen to keep delivering this product or service (see Chapter 4 for more on this aspect). Now, with this list of activities in mind, work out what you'd do if the processes failed. Here are some solutions:
  - **Dual-source vital component suppliers.** Although doing so may have a cost in terms of losing a better price by not committing to a higher volume with a single supplier (an economy of scale), it may make all the difference if your supplier lets you down.



Dual-sourcing also provides a hidden benefit in that the two suppliers don't want to be outdone by the rival on quality or delivery reliability. A single supplier that you rely on and has had your business for years may take it for granted and get complacent, whereas a supplier that knows it's not unique tends to raise its game and pay better attention to your account.

- **Maintain a contingency stock at a separate location to your main site.** The best and cheapest way is to negotiate this extra stock as part of the existing contract with your supplier, so that it always has one month's worth of supply in stock at its location and cost.

Also, carry one month's stock based on your current forecast. So if you forecast to sell 112 pallets in February, ensure that you have 224 in your warehouse at the start of the month and that the level doesn't fall significantly below the original 112 figure. Although predictable seasonal spikes in sales are easy to recognise and prepare for, businesses can get caught out with the unexpected spikes in demand caused by external events (an example is the run on antibacterial products during the swine flu scare).

- **Know what happens during a week in the life of your business.** Sit down with a colleague or two and write down all the processes that take place in a normal week in the life of your business. Then identify the things that must happen for those processes not to threaten the business's survival. If you don't have the answers now, Chapters 4 and 7 provide you with options to consider for some of these items. Often, the simplest and most common-sense solutions are the best.

- **Keep an eye on the news.** Look at how events can affect your business and the wider business environment. Not only can you steal a march on your competitors, but also you may even create a few new business opportunities.

- **Carry out a regular quality check on your stock received.** If one of your suppliers changes the specification of a component or produces something to a lower than expected standard, make sure that you find out first, before one of your customers.

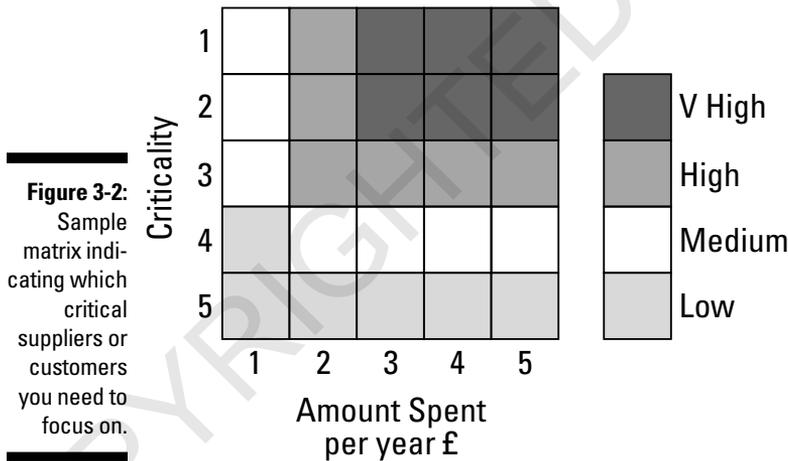
- ✓ **Create a mini Business Continuity Plan (BCP).** Just to get you started, imagine an incident befalls your business premises: say a fire has ripped through and nothing appears salvageable. Take ten minutes with a pen and paper to work through the scenario as you imagine it playing out. How would you recover from something like this? How would you keep going during the worst of it? What are your considerations? Write them down and produce a simple two-page plan for what you'd do. We provide much more of your full BCP in Chapter 8.



## Prioritising Your Customers and Suppliers

Of course, all businesses need to maintain good relations with their customers and suppliers, and no doubt you spend considerable time and effort doing so. Therefore, the last thing you want to happen is for a disruption to put these carefully nurtured relationships at risk. In this section, we discuss a few precautions you can take to mitigate that possibility:

- ✓ **Think about your critical suppliers and customers so that you know which to concentrate on when a disruption hits.** A very simple approach is to get hold of a list of all your suppliers and plot them on a matrix that shows the criticality of the things that they supply and the amount you spend with them. Carry out a similar process with your customers to show how much they spend with you and any onerous contractual penalties. Figure 3-2 shows an example of this kind of matrix.



A graph like the one in Figure 3-2 can identify those suppliers that supply critical products (they're plotted higher up on the vertical axis), and those suppliers that your business spends a lot of money with (plotted further to the right on the horizontal axis). So you see the suppliers that deliver critical components and that you spend the most with. (However, bear in mind that the volume of goods purchased with a supplier, not cost, may be the most important factor to your business.)

- ✓ **Find out what continuity measures your suppliers have in place.** For the suppliers that you identify in Figure 3-3's matrix as being critical and/or high volume, ask them whether they have BCPs in place and if you can see a copy. If they're that critical to your firm but don't have



any continuity plans in place, find another supplier or work with the existing one to help it put something in place.

Even when you have the most secure BCPs in place, if your sole supplier doesn't then the danger of failure somewhere along the line remains high. An investment, such as working with your key suppliers to help them put BC in place, not only makes your supply chain a bit more resilient, but also may reveal other frailties that you need to address – the sorts of things that you wouldn't be aware of until your expected delivery of raw materials fails to arrive.

- ✔ **Ask your customers what service level they expect from you while your business is suffering a disaster and afterwards.** Putting a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place is a good idea so that in the event of difficulty you know exactly what suppliers expect of you and can work this into your BC considerations.
- ✔ **Come up with other ways to influence the resilience in your supply chain.** In the bath one evening – you need to be relaxed – think about your suppliers and their suppliers and their supplier's suppliers and see whether you have any influence on the chain that enables your business to function. The key is to focus on the suppliers that are crucial to your core business functions. If your stationery supplier lets you down, you simply run to the local retail park and get the things that you need. But if your sole oohjamiwotsit cog supplier lets you down in supplying the cog that keeps 'line 1' running, life may be very different.
- ✔ **Question your professional services vendors about what help you can expect from them if you have a disaster.** Accountants, lawyers, doctors, bankers and consultants may offer you advice, special terms, office space at their premises and/or back office help. If you don't ask, you don't get (of course, sometimes you ask and still don't get, but you know what we mean). Also, look into what plans and procedures they have to keep you going if they have a disaster.
- ✔ **Use your supplier contacts for advice and support.** This point may sound obvious but you can be surprised at how far suppliers may go to support a customer. Use this support to ensure that you can keep your business running when disaster strikes. Your suppliers have a wealth of experience in dealing with all sorts of disruptive events and may be able to advise you on the best course of action or even provide support through offering the use of their premises or hauliers, for example.
- ✔ **Get to know your suppliers.** Whether you've not ordered enough to meet the demand of your customers or your supplier has had a disruption at its end and is below usual capacity, the relationship with your supplier can be crucial. If the supplier is that important to your business and supplies goods that form part of your business's critical activities (the ones we focus on in Chapter 4), building up a good relationship is an essential investment. Doing so may mean a face-to-face meeting each month and doing your bit by providing regular forecast updates for orders, or even inviting your contact to the firm's Christmas do – simple stuff that can make all the difference when push comes to shove.

- ✔ **Discover how important you are to your supplier.** If you're a big customer, you can expect a higher priority than a small customer, and vice versa. If you discover that you're of low priority then it's time to start looking at ways to increase your firm's importance with the supplier through additional orders or face-to-face discussions. If this isn't feasible, seek out alternative suppliers while you have time on your side. The worst time to find out that you're not on the priority list of one of your key suppliers is during a disruption!

## Publicity: Keeping People Informed

In an emergency, you need to get information to the right people quickly, concisely and accurately. The following list provides some ideas relating to your business's internal and external communications:

- ✔ **Warn and inform.** Write a template for what you may want to communicate and tape it to the side of a megaphone or keep it in the boot of your car. You then don't have to struggle to recall what to say when you're briefing your staff.
- ✔ **Set up an all-staff text message so that you can send a text broadcast from your phone.** Do the same with an email group so you can email everyone you want to notify; it saves wasting time selecting the group. Test this broadcast, so that recipients know what to expect and what action they need to take; for example, acknowledging by email or texting back that they're safe.
- ✔ **Use a conference bridge facility.** Many vendors offer this service for free. To discover the companies that do in your area, type 'conference bridge facility' into your Internet search engine. The service works by simply telling your staff to call into a pre-existing number with a personal identification number (PIN). All callers are then able to talk together on the same call, which can help avoid confusion with people passing messages on incorrectly (such as 'everything is all right' becoming 'everything is alright!').

Have a structured agenda ready for these calls because during tense times of disruption people forget the normally observed protocol that only one person can effectively speak at a time.

Rehearse these calls, if only to check that the number still works.

- ✔ **Appoint a single point of contact for the emergency services.** This arrangement ensures that one person handles any questions and answers effectively and only once. Preferably, this person is level-headed and able to think rationally in a crisis. The person should be





able to provide maps or floor plans of your premises that show hazards and the locations of stopcocks, mains switches, shut-off valves and so on. Also, appoint an informed deputy to cover when this person is out of the office.

- ✓ **Keep an eye on what's going on in the world.** Some people see 24-hour news as intrusive and/or boring, but for the small business, being able to see what's going on in the world in near real time can be a plus. Check what's happening internationally, regionally and locally, and assess the impact that these events may have on your business. For example, if a major road traffic accident affects one of your supply routes then early notice of this can give you the time to make alternative arrangements, such as using other routes or transport options.

## *Public Infrastructure: Liaising with People in Your Community*

Maintain a list of contacts for reporting an emergency to, such as your utility providers, local authorities and other businesses within your area, and keep it safely off-site so you can access it quickly. Other useful numbers are those commonly referred to as 'In Case of Emergencies' (ICE) contacts such as 101, 999, Crimestoppers (0800 555111) and the Counter-terrorism Hotline (0800 78932).

You can add all these numbers to your staff contact list (which we discuss in the earlier section 'People: Keeping staff members safe and accounted for'). Also, ensure that staff enter numbers they're likely to need in an emergency into mobile phones as easily identifiable contacts.

Here are some more preparations that you can make in this area:

- ✓ **Book yourself and your staff onto a Project Argus (Area Reinforcement Gained Using Scenarios) course with your local police or local council.** These courses aim to simulate terrorist attacks in order to teach businesses how to deal with different situations and reactions. They can provide you with solutions for dealing with and recovering from an act of terrorism, if such an incident strikes your business.
- ✓ **Enrol your security or reception staff members onto a Project Griffin course.** Again run by local authorities nationwide, Project Griffin encourages relations between the police and local businesses in order to communicate with each other and share information about any terrorist activity or crime in the area. Both Project Argus and Griffin courses are

free to attend and are particularly relevant if your business is situated near or in a city. They provide invaluable advice to make your business more resilient.

- ✓ **Ask your local council whether it offers free advice and assistance on BC.** Make contact and check whether it has a BC or resilience forum that you can join. These groups can offer a good introduction to business continuity and local authority BC managers are a good source of reference for putting BC in place in your business.
- ✓ **Download your local area's Community Risk Register.** You can find it through an Internet search engine. Have a look and see what risks your particular area faces, or indeed the area that your key suppliers operate from – just to give you something else to worry about (we write more on risk in Chapter 5).
- ✓ **Speak to your local fire station about fire safety for your business.** Arrange a PAT (Portable Appliance Test) for your electrical appliances, get a D certificate on your power circuit and a free smoke detector/alarm from the Fire Brigade, and buy a fire extinguisher. Ask your neighbours what fire prevention they have in place.
- ✓ **Look around your locality and spot potential hazards.** A petrol station, a pub, a back alley, a jeweller's or a doctor's surgery may present risks to your business.
- ✓ **Download your flood risk map from the Environment Agency.** Be pleased with what you see . . . or start carrying items upstairs.
- ✓ **Contact your local crime prevention officer or neighbourhood watch scheme.** Ask about crime in the area and assess your crime prevention measures. You can check your local area for crime rates by searching the Internet.



## *Phone Numbers: Keeping Essential Contact Info Handy*

Having up-to-date contact details is crucial if you find your business in a tight spot. Here are a few people and organisations to consider contacting if things start to go awry:

- ✓ **Next of kin:** Keep a record of the designated next-of-kin details for your staff. Police require this info because they have the awful job of notifying relatives in the event of an injury or death.



- ✓ **Skilled trades-people and responders:** Store details for people and companies that you may need to call upon such as emergency services, local authority, taxis, vehicle, accommodation, locksmiths, landlord, plumbers, electricians, carpenters (for boarding up), glaziers, IT service providers (helpdesk), utilities and professional services (doctor, accountant, solicitor, bank manager, insurer, loss adjuster and so on).

Some areas distribute locally produced directories where local firms can advertise their services. These are posted through the doors of local businesses and houses or may be available at the local library or on the internet.

- ✓ **Customers and suppliers:** Realistically, you aren't going to be able to call all your customers or clients immediately following a disruption, and so you may want to prioritise these contact details: those that depend on you as a supplier and would be unable to survive without your business's output.
- ✓ **Your friends and family:** Murphy's Law says that your mobile phone battery won't be charged at the time you need it most. Call your nearest and dearest and ask him or her to call everyone on your Christmas card list (oh yes, make a Christmas card list!) to let them know you're fine but not to call because you're busy with incident management. You could suggest that they can call your partner for an update later on at, say, 6 p.m. You then ring your partner at 5:50 p.m. to give an update. Doing so means you have to make only one call and you manage the inevitable call volume during a newsworthy incident in your area.
- ✓ **Recruitment agencies:** Firms you can call for casual labour or interim special skills to reinforce or replace your workforce.
- ✓ **Salvage and restoration specialists:** Companies that specialise in document recovery, data recovery, underpinning, drying/de-humidifying, fire/smoke damage, flood damage, structural engineers and pest control.
- ✓ **The media:** Create your own contacts within the local press; call them and introduce yourself before they need to get hold of you during a crisis. This approach encourages good relations and gives the impression that you're working with rather than against the media.