

# Ready... Set... Learn! Get Ready NOW for What's NEXT!

**Resource Type:** Risk eNews

**Topic:** Business Continuity Planning

"You must dig the well before you're thirsty and become curious now—not when a crisis inevitably presents itself." – Ozan Varol, *Think Like a Rocket Scientist*

This week the NRMC team is putting the finishing touches on a new business continuity web application that we hope will motivate and support teams trying to get ready for 'what's next.' We have been reflecting on the fact although human beings are hopelessly ill-equipped to forecast the future, pondering plans to cope with inevitable surprises is worth the time that it requires.

Many nonprofit leaders are seeking a clear, 'best practice' approach to creating a business continuity plan for their organization. Preferably a simple, straightforward approach that won't take too much time. Or too much effort. Or rock the boat.

If reduced down to bare bones, a business continuity plan is a resource that helps you accomplish two vital tasks:

1. *Identify mission-critical functions or activities that must continue during a period of sub-optimal operations.* You won't be able to operate 'normally' if your building is inaccessible, your staff can't get to the systems and files they need, or your clients are facing unusual amounts of stress.
2. *Outline strategies and processes—essentially a roadmap—to support the orderly resumption of operations.*

As your team works to prepare for the next interruption to what's 'normal' in your world, we invite you to make use of this suite of three brand-new resources from NRMC:

- **Business Impact Analysis** – Our fillable PDF prompts you to identify key functions and each function's 'maximum acceptable downtime'. Next, you'll identify the recovery timeframe and strategies. Completing a Business Impact Analysis is often the most challenging component of business continuity planning. We've simplified the process so there's no disincentive to get started.
- **Lessons Learned Worksheet** – This fillable PDF helps you identify lessons learned from your agency's handling of the COVID-19 interruption, or any crisis.
- **Learning from Wins, Near Misses, and Failures** – In our consulting work with nonprofit teams we often discuss the fact that failures and near misses present fertile opportunities to learn. Yet many teams move on too quickly and miss out on powerful learning moments. We've created a fillable worksheet to help your team identify potent lessons. The opportunity to learn extends beyond failure and near misses. In *Think Like a Rocket Scientist*, Ozan Varol reminds us to pause, in the wake of a 'win' to ask: "What went wrong with this success? What role did luck, opportunity, and privilege play? What can I learn from it? If we don't ask these questions, luck will eventually run its course, and the near misses will catch up with us."

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These three tools will give you the advantage of evaluating your organization's resilience during a recent business interruption. Completing these worksheets while the effects of a disruption are still fresh in your mind

will showcase where your nonprofit utilizes resilience practices and where to focus efforts for improvement. And while this is not a replacement for a full Business Continuity Plan, these exercises will make use of the types of candid conversations that are necessary for building organizational resilience muscles required to survive future disruptions.