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How to complete a disaster recovery plan process without funding

By Paul Kirvan

If you don't have the budget for a business continuity and disaster recovery initiative, other options are available. This article provides several quick and easy ways you can complete a disaster recovery plan process with limited funds and offers a specific example of how to make it work.

Information is out there!

First, search the internet for whatever information you can obtain on the subject and use those discoveries to lay the groundwork for your disaster recovery plan process.

A resource like [SearchDisasterRecovery offers numerous free templates](#) and forms to build plans. Articles on SDR will help provide the necessary guidance, plus tips and tricks to make your program a success.

In the past, some [BC/DR standards](#) were available for free download. Check carefully, as today most are no longer free. Standards are helpful in ensuring you cover all of the issues when preparing a program. They are also valuable from an audit perspective, as auditors are increasingly aware of the importance of [auditing BC/DR plans](#) and programs.

Several organizations, such as the Business Continuity Institute and the Disaster Recovery Institute International, provide a wealth of information on all aspects of the profession, plus how-to articles that can help you get started.

In reality, you may be able to research and complete a BC and/or DR plan without spending a dime. The only [real investment](#) in the disaster recovery plan process will be your time and your partners' time. Can BC and DR be performed with little to no investment? Based on the vast amount of ready to use tools and information available today, the answer is definitely "yes."

A crash course on the disaster recovery plan process

The following example applies to a small or medium-sized organization.

Suppose you receive an OK from senior management to complete a plan, but are told no funding is available due to budget shortfalls. First, identify the steps you'll need to take to complete the plan. This information can be found in numerous places, including at the resources noted earlier in this article.

The [DR project plan](#) will also identify specific departments whose input will be important.

You'll need to decide if you want to pursue a [business impact analysis and risk assessment,](#) as these two activities contribute significant data to the plan development process. If that's not going to happen -- for example, if management has given you a tight timeframe -- begin your research to find a suitable template with a framework and content that meet your requirements.

Once you find something suitable, begin filling out the blank areas, especially the [list of contacts for internal teams](#), employees, key stakeholders, vendors and suppliers. Some of these you may have to compile from other master lists, so consider doing that first.

You may need to rewrite paragraphs in sections like the purpose, scope, objectives and criteria for declaring a disaster. Be sure to tailor the content in your disaster recovery plan process to your organization.

Carefully examine the procedures for responding to an incident if they are in your template. Determine if they are reasonable and can be performed by members of an emergency team. Including an incident response plan is desirable, but under the circumstances, you may wish to defer it.

Be sure to reference any technology disaster recovery plans that may be available, as they will help recover the systems and infrastructure needed in your plan.

If, for some reason, you have no DR plans, proceed as if they are in place.

Once you have completed a draft plan, and if you have time, circulate it to your management and others in the organization for their comments. Use their input to update your plan.

Assuming you have time for this project and can find suitable resources as described above, you ought to be able to complete a plan in a week or less.

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