



Business Continuity: Getting it Right

Al Berman of DRI International on How to Rise to Global Challenges

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When it comes to business continuity and disaster recovery planning, it isn't the cause of the disaster that's the concern - it's the potentially devastating effects.

In a new interview on the topic, **Al Berman**, president of DRI International, discusses:



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Today's biggest threats to organizations;
The greatest gaps in disaster recovery planning;
Three steps organizations can take to improve BC/DR preparedness.

Berman is a CBCP, a member of the ASIS BS25999 technical committee, a member of the Committee of Experts for ANSI-ANAB, a former member of the NY City Partnership for Security and Risk Management and the co-chair for the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation committee to create the new standard for the US Private Sector Preparedness Act (PL 110-53). Over a career that has spanned 25 years, he has served as a President and CIO for a major financial institution, National Practice Leader for Operational Resiliency for PricewaterhouseCoopers and Global Business Continuity practice leader for Marsh.

TOM FIELD: We spoke about a year ago, and we talked about the **H1N1 virus**. Why don't you give us just a little background on the institute and on yourself for people that maybe didn't hear that interview?

AL BERMAN: Sure. DRI International was founded in 1988, and its job was to be the focus for business continuity and disaster recovery and a

compendium of knowledge, and seeking out those issues that would most affect people 20 years ago. Since then, we've grown to an organization that now has certified professionals in over 100 countries. We do training in over 45 countries. We have about 8,000 active members and are expanding throughout the world and specifically in Asia as we speak.

I actually came to DRI about four years ago. Before that I was president of a banking subsidiary. I am a former CIO. And I joined the board about four years ago and became the Executive Director probably about six months after that, and subsequently President.

Disaster Types

FIELD: Now, Al, I was told years ago that when you look at **business continuity and disaster recovery**, it breaks down into three distinct categories: your natural disasters, your manmade disasters, and pandemic. Do these categories still hold true when you think of business continuity and disaster recovery as a global challenge?

BERMAN: Well, let me give you an insight into business continuity, which actually is cause independent. Before I headed PriceWaterhouse Cooper's practice, I actually worked for a research firm, and by 1995 we found 146 causes of disasters. That's 1995 -- no dirty bombs, no nuclear backpacks. So, business continuity really focuses not on causes, but really on effects. When we look at effects, we find it in really four different distinct places.

One, we find it in the facility. A facility has been flooded, it's been burnt down to the ground, it's been affected with SARS or H1N1, but you can't use the facility.

The second one we see is in the business operation. People can't get to work. You have supply chain problems; you have infrastructure problems, but those that really affect the business process.

The third affect we see is in technology -- the traditional viruses, failures of systems, those things that have to deal with communication.

And the fourth one looks at the corporation, intellectual property issues, succession planning, merges and acquisition. It was only a year or so, again, that they almost shut down my Blackberry because of intellectual property issues. So we look at from a business continuity point, really, the effects or the impacts of things and not necessarily the causes, because, as we well know, we don't know what the next cause is going to be.

Biggest Threats

FIELD: Well, that's a good point and a good perceptive. When you look at in that light AI, what do see as today's biggest threats to global organizations?

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