

Selling Your Business Resumption Plan to the OTop Dogs:o Itœs Not : Tough as You Think, Part 2



By [Leo Wrobel](#)

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If you are a mid-level manager trying to Osello your disaster recovery plan in thornor executive office, you know ito tough to make that pitch. In Part 2 of his three-part series, Leo Wrobel shows you ow to brief your executives, schedule presentations, and devise workaround plans and procedures, and much more

In the [last article](#), we made the statement that it is not as difficult to get support and funding for Business Resumption Plan if one employs the Otricks of the tradeo used by high-priced consants to get the executiveo attention and communicate with them in terms they understand. We continue with theetails and techniques in Part 2 of this series.

Getting Executive Commitment: How *Not* to Brief Your Executives

It is a well-known fact that the human attention span is about 90 seconds. In a meing, if a person does not say something meaningful to the audience in that timeframe, eyes and thoughts start to ander. With executives, this spar shortens to about 15 seconds as they have an advantage. They can count on someone ise to listen to whatever i was you had to say. If what you present is garbled with unfocused data or confusintechical terms, then you wi have lost the value of your presentation because the executive will tune you ot

This brings us to another problem in such a forum. When asking "permission to plan there are really only three answers from the executive that are possible

A. YES B. NO C. Let's STUDY this some more

Now which do you suppose is the answer most often given? And why do recovery plansake ten years to complete? It's always option OCo because technical people are not always so good at presenti their needs to management Sure, technical service persons know exactly whatthey need, but they go about asking for it all wrong

What Management Does NOT Want to Hear

Consider the following example of a presentation opening

OGood morning. If you will refer to the 168-page report in front of you, you will ie that I am here to alert you to some problems with the LAN switches. The network has been down four times so far tis year. For starters we may need a UPS on each media access unit at a cost of \$5,000 each. We would alslike to upgrade each LAN switch with Amalgamated Revision 4.12 enhanced power and common logic, and hottand-by protection switching. Route diversity on each drop throughout the building is costly, but recoimended. Furthermore,no

By this time, the executive is fingering his Blackberry, doodling on a pad, or looling at the next agenda item while expecting someone else to listen to the presentation. What will be the most likely utcome of the meeting? The answer will not be "Yes." He or she does not really understand what you are talkirabout, only that you *think* you need something. The answer will not be "No" for essentially the same reason. Managementoes not want to go on recorrd against whatever it was you were trying to ask for! So what is left? The safe pla OLetœs study it some mor

Because of a few key mistakes, the presenter does not get his funding; instead, he walsks out with a longer list o

questions from management than the ones he brought into the meeting. He has also daaged his credibility for the next meetingoif he ever gets one.

The key to a successful presentation is this: Do not speak to management i*technical* terms. Use *business* terms. Management understands business terminology, and it is meaningful to them in a presntation. Let's try again anothe way:

OGood morning. Are you aware that D.P.B. (Deep Pockets Bank) runs the risk of a \$7 per minute financial hi every time the LAN supporting our fraud monitoring system fails? It has happened for times this year. We have identified several areas of exposure, and would like you to help us consider pøtective alternatives tha can prevent this from happening in the future.

Wow, how's that for an opening? Will that get management's attention? You bet, for pproximately ten seconds. That's about how long it takes the CEO's head to look around the table and ask, "Whre did that \$750 figure come from?" When the shoulders all shrug, the meeting is over. Sure, they will listen t you, but no action will be takei because the figures are in doubt. What answer can you expect? You guessed it. "Let' study this some more.c

Think about how long it takes to get a meeting with a CEO or a CIO in your companIf you have to take that mucI time and trouble, go in ready for action and not predestined for failure. Do your hmeowork first.

The best way to "sell" management is to produce believable loss scenarios, and veriy your figures with people the manager holds in confidence. These include vice presidents (or equivalent) of sales marketing, operations engineering, finance, legal, and other divisions in position to truly assess the eect of a disaster in terms of revenue. A competent consulting company or the company's internal or external auditors can so help because they are credible to management. You will then need a hard-hitting presentation, preferably ith less than five slides. We have a modest example in this chapter

Define the Scope of the Preliminary BIA

As with all projects, you must determine the scope of the BIA. This can be done by neeting with the appropriate management initially to determine their expectations for the outcome of the BIA. Athis point, it is imperative that you set the clientøes expectations, telling what deliverables they will and will not from the BIA.

Should You Use a Preliminary BIA Questionnaire?

Many contingency planners use questionnaires in the preliminary BIA process. In mo: cases, they go out tc managers, project leads, or heads of departments because they are generally more knwledgeable about the wide scope of activities in their area.*Sometimes* these work, depending on the organizationøes culture. Other times si questionnaires are delegated by the responsible manager to others to answer some o the more technical questions regarding budget, communications, computers, etc. More than likely they will be blon off altogether, and a 1C percent return rate is typical. Sorryøthere is no shortcut to face-to-face interviews with responsible managers and executives, as described later in Part 3 of this series

Schedule Presentation(s)

It may be possible to line up responsible managers and questionnaire recipients in i meeting. One trick is to have a senior manager call the meeting. Even if all they do is say a few words about impoance of the project and then gently excuse themselves, you have a useful forum with those who stay. Make the mo of this time! At this time, you should also arrange for any equipment you might need to make the presentation(s), sch as projectors, PCs, screens, handouts, etc.

The type of information you are going to hone in onøeither in interviews, questionnaires, or meetingsowill vary from project to project. This depends upon such things as the size of the company or organization, the amount of time you have to complete the BIA, how much access you have to the people answering the qeuestionnaires, etc.

Relevant information may include, but is not necessarily limited to

- Accounts receivable standards
- Accumulation of non-processed transactions

- Business and technical impacts
- Business and technical recovery requirements
- Bypass plans and procedures
- General concerns of a major business disruption
- Impacts to client's customer
- Interactions between client and its customers
- Interactions between client and its suppliers
- Location and type of off-site storage
- Methods and frequency of backing up data, computer programs, and operating system
- Monetary effects of a major business interruption
- Operating expenses incurred during an outage
- Production and company processes and procedures
- Production computer programs
- Legal consequences of a major business interruption
- Regulatory consequences of a major business interruption

Personnel

Normally, a company's or organization's critical employees would be expected to use a recovery, be it on-site or at an off-site recovery center. However, keep in mind that, in an area-wide disaster, employees would give their homes and families priority over their work. They might refuse to go to work to do the recovery. In this case, alternate personnel would need to be available and identified in the recovery plan.

Alternatively, if a company or organization contracts with a backup site, the contract can provide for alternate personnel supplied by the backup site during recovery. Obviously, recovery center personnel would have to periodically receive updated training to know how to perform the recovery for a client that could not supply personnel.

The preliminary BIA should consider all personnel needed during the recovery, including management, salaried and hourly personnel, and support staffs. Keep in mind that all may not be needed the first few days, so it should provide room for how many people are needed the first day of recovery, the second day, etc.

Equipment

To perform a company or organization recovery, damaged or destroyed equipment—computers, fax machines, telephones, voicemail hardware, filing cabinets, desks, chairs, copiers, PCs, laptops, printers, forms, etc.—would need to be replaced. Even when such services are contracted far ahead of time, the equipment may not become available, installed, and available for use within the timeframe required by a company or organization doing a recovery.

Another solution is to contract with a company or organization backup site. For a subscription fee, this site could provide the facilities, equipment, and personnel to resume business operations on short notice for the affected company or organization. This approach is usually much more economical than mirroring facilities and equipment.

Voice Communications (Command, Control, Communication, Computers and Intelligence, or 4C2io)

As we all know, voice communications is one of the most critical elements of company or organization operation. A disaster could disrupt voice communications. During an area-wide disaster, not only telephones but also cell phones are quite often useless because the phone networks rapidly become saturated, and they can only handle a certain number of calls at any one time.

Data Communications

The same principles that apply to voice communications recovery also apply to data communications recovery. LAN/WAN recovery can, potentially, be especially difficult and time-consuming without specialized expertise to supervise and execute it.

Facility

For a company or organization that has one facility, the recovery plan must provide some means of recovery if that facility is destroyed or if, for any reason, no one can enter it for several days or weeks. Most people are unaware that most municipal fire departments have the authority to quarantine a building or facility during an emergency. For example, if a hazardous material (hazmat) spill were to occur just outside a company or organization's facility, the fire department could prevent anyone from entering that structure for several hours, days, or even weeks. This would make it very difficult for a company or organization to continue, resume, or recover their business operations in a reasonable amount of time unless it moved to a recovery site.

Data Backups

Data is critical to the recovery of any computerized business operation. It is the one element that usually cannot be re-created if it is lost. Data can be softcopy (electronic) or hardcopy (paper). Electronic data can include operating systems, computer programs (applications), word processing files, spreadsheets, databases, etc. Some experts exclude operating systems and applications from this classification, but include only files created by the users.

Backups can be taken several times a day, a week, or a month, depending upon the production volume and the nature of the organization's business, but especially depending upon how long the company could afford to be non-productive.

Backups are generally categorized as base-line or incremental. *Base-line backups* involve transferring critical files in their entirety to tape, disk, or to another computer. *Incremental backups* involve transferring only those files that have changed since the last base-line or incremental backup was taken. As you can imagine, incremental backups take less time to do, thereby saving valuable computer and personnel time as well as storage space.

Off-Site Storage

In addition to base-line and incremental, data backups fall into two other categories: those kept in or near the computer room for rapid user data recovery, and those kept off-site, to be used to recover from a serious problem.

Backups kept off-site should be stored in a secure location that is sufficiently distant from the production facility so that, in the event of a major area-wide catastrophe, both sites will not be wiped out. One rule of thumb used for many years by business continuity professionals is that the backup storage site should be a minimum of seven to ten miles from the processing site. Although this is a general rule of thumb, there are geographical locations where this recommended distance would not be acceptable—for example, in Tornado Alley, or along the Florida coast.

Computer Application Programs

Some software vendors encode their proprietary software so that it will run on one particular machine identified uniquely, usually by serial number and not on any other. If a company or organization were trying to recover on an identical but different machine, this software would not function until the vendor supplied a key or some other means of unlocking the software to run on the recovery machine. Arrangements need to be made with the software vendor ahead of time, and documented in the recovery plan.

Workaround Plans and Procedures

As part of the BIA, the questionnaire should uncover what workaround and recovery plans already exist, so that they can be incorporated into the business continuity plan or disaster recovery plan that would be developed once the BIA has been completed. The important sections and what should be covered in each are described in the following sections.

Management Summary

As is typical in a technical report, this section should be one to two pages long, highlighting the principal findings and recommendations from the full report. Because of the length of this section, charts and graphs should be kept to a

minimum, or not used at all. The Management Summary should contain enough information to give management a good idea of the full contents of the report, and what actions need to be taken. The reader can then go to the full report to get any details that were not included in the summary.

It is always good to put the financial Findings and Recommendations near the beginning of this section, together with a small table to illustrate them, because financial impacts are nearly always management's primary concern. For example:

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY¹

Priority	Financial Impact After One Day	Financial Impact After One Month	Critical Function
1	\$100,000 or more	\$10 million or more	Yes
2	\$1 to \$99,999	\$100,000 to \$9.99 million	No
3	None	None to \$99,999	No

¹The book this is excerpted from is actually Business Resumption Planning, Second Edition | 2009 by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC. Edited by Leo A. Wrobel.

Assumptions

This is a very important section. You need to list all assumptions made in the analysis, such as: The information and data returned in the BIA questionnaire is accurate and complete, or All dollars used in analyzing Canadian Accounting financials were converted from Canadian to U.S. dollars

Findings

As the name implies, this section should contain all the information gleaned from the analysis of the data supplied (see [Figure 1](#)). We recommend subdividing this section into the various categories used in the BIA questionnaire. Leave all Recommendations Based on these Findings for the next section

The financial impact to XYZ Company after a disaster approximately doubles for the first three days after the disaster, increases significantly after one week of being out of service, and even more significantly after two weeks.



[Figure 1](#) Findings of the report

Recommendations

Here you can tell the client's management all the things that you recommend that they do to remedy any problems you have uncovered in the analysis. Most, but not all, of these recommendations will apply to the development of a business continuity plan or disaster recovery plan. Liberal use of charts, tables, and diagrams should be used here because, much better than verbiage, they convey the impact of the report, particularly the Findings.

Appendices

The appendix(es) should contain any data too detailed to include in the body of the report, and can contain copies of all the data collected from the questionnaires (see [Figure 2](#)). That way, if someone reading the report questions any findings, he or she can verify that the data was accurately interpreted.



[Figure 2](#) Financial Accounting appendix

Present Findings and Recommendations

Once your preliminary BIA findings have been completed, it is time to produce the executive presentation. It will contain your findings, recommendations, and resource request.

Quite often, the attendees at this presentation include the involved vice president, his or her direct reports, and any other management or technical personnel directly involved in the project or requested to be present by management.

This presentation should be limited to one hour maximum, and it should highlight the major findings and recommendations in your BIA report. In most cases, management's major concerns are financial, so you should devote a significant amount of time in your presentation to cover this. You should also set aside enough time to answer questions that are sure to arise.

In the Next Article

In the final article of this series, we will present examples of executive presentations we have used that secure commitment and funding on as few as three slides. Stay tuned.
