Business Continuity - Then I Got Run Over by a Golf Cart
by Linda Westfall

[Software Excellence Academy](#)

The Golf Cart

I have not posted a newsletter in a while. There is actually an explanation for that. I was run over by a golf cart.

It was rather a freak accident. My husband and I were at the Pyrotechnic Guide International (PGI) conference the first week of August. If there are still any of you out there that don't know this, my husband Rob and I build and shoot fireworks for a hobby. In fact, I am the only female in the 50+ year history of the PGI to win Grand Master (but that is another story).

It was Thursday evening and Rob had loaded up our golf cart with our boxes and tools from the fireworks manufacturing area. I drove the truck over and we started moving everything to the truck. I pick up an armful of boxes and started around the front of the cart. Rob picked up a box and knocked over another one. That second bo hit hard on the gas pedal. Hard enough to pop the emergency break and the golf cart took off at full speed. It proceeded to knock me over and run over the right side of my body, over my hip, and up over my shoulder.

Anyway, off to the emergency room for an evening of waiting and x-rays. The good news was nothing was broken, I was very lucky because the medical people on site thought I had a broken hip. The bad news was I spent the next 5 weeks in a pain pill fog and didn't get much work accomplished. But don't worry -- I am healed and healthy now.

So the point of this story is that it got me thinking about business continuity. What happens to your business or your project when disaster strikes? Even if it is a little min-disaster like mine was, it can affect your company, your projects, and your ability to deliver.

Business Continuity

Business continuity is defined as "the capability of the organization to continue delivery of products or services at acceptable predefined levels following a disruptive incident" (ISO 2012). Business continuity is about planning, establishing, implementing, operating, monitoring, reviewing, maintaining, and continually improving a documented management system to:

- Protect against disruptive incidents by reducing the probability that disruptive incidents will occur

- Prepare for disruptive incidents if they do occur by creating response and recovery strategies and plans, so the business will be ready to take appropriate action and thus minimize potential damage

This is done regardless of whether the disruptive incident is a negative issue, that is part of "business as usual," or a major disaster. According to the Business Continuity Institute, "business continuity is about building and improving resilience in your business."

Resilience is widely defined as the ability of an organization to absorb, respond to and recover from disruptions" (BCI 2013).

The management of business continuity is fundamentally part of risk management. However, business continuity also includes aspects of information security, information technology management, compliance, and governance. The Business Continuity Institute defines a business continuity management life cycle which includes six good practices (based on BCI 2013)

Two management practices:

1. Policy and program management: Defining an organizational policy for business continuity, and strategies and tactics for how that policy will be implemented, controlled, and evaluated using business continuity program management

2. Embedding business continuity: The institutionalization of business continuity practices into the ongoing, daily business activities and the organizational culture

Four technical practices:

1. Analysis: Analysis and assessment of the organization and its key business functions to identify potentially disruptive incidents, their probability of occurrence, and the impact to the organization's ability to continue key business functions if those disruptive incidents do occur

2. Design: Identify and select appropriate strategies and tactics to respond to, and recover from, disruptive incidents if they do occur, in order to minimize any stoppage of, or hindrance to, the organization's key business functions

3. Implementation: Create and document a business continuity plan that includes instructions and procedures that enable the organization to respond to, and recover from, disruptive incidents with minimal stoppage or hindrance to the organization's key business functions

4. Validation: Evaluate and confirm that the business continuity management program meets the business continuity policy objectives and that the organization's business continuity plan will fulfill its purpose

Disaster recovery is a subset of business continuity that focuses on the organization's ability to recover or continue the operations of vital information technology and technical systems that support critical business functions following a disaster (natural or human-induced).

My Plan for Business Continuity

So what am I going to do to help ensure the business continuity of the Software Excellence Academy and the Westfall Team?

1. I am writing articles for this newsletter ahead of time so I have a backlog that my executive assistant, Cathy can post if I am "out of commission"

2. I am scheduling webinar speakers for several months in advance (right now I have speakers through January) and Cathy has learned to moderate those webinars

3. I am in the process of moving all of my courses online so they are available on-demand if I can't teach them live. Plus, I am considering cross-training someone else to teach our courses. It looks like live training may be coming back.

If you have any other recommendations for me or other ideas on implementing Business Continuity, please add them to the comment area below.

References

BCI 2013: Good Practice Guidelines 2013 Global Edition Edited Highlights: A Guide to Global Good Practices in Business Continuity. United Kingdom: Business Continuity Institute.

ISO 2012: ISO 22301:2012 Standard, Societal Security—Business Continuity Management System—Requirements. Geneva, Switzerland: International Organization of Standards (ISO)