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A BUSINESS CONTINUITY NEWSLETTER FOR DECISION MAKERS  
FROM ROTHSTEIN ASSOCIATES INC.

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## BUSINESS CONTINUITY: PUBLISH OR PERISH?

By Philip Jan Rothstein, FBCI

Picture an orthopedic surgeon learning to perform arthroscopic knee surgery. Before he is let loose on his first live knee, the surgeon is going to learn and practice through a variety of methods: classroom learning, reading books and the latest published literature, practicing on models or cadavers, studying under and observing seasoned practitioners, and, before he is fully on his own, working under the careful scrutiny of his superiors and peers until he is fully capable of working independently with less stringent review and observation. Once he has achieved a level of professional competence, he is expected to maintain his expertise through continuing education and to share his knowledge with others learning his profession. After all, his patients could really suffer if he does not diligently apply himself to learning and validating proper techniques. Yet, despite the parallel risk to the enterprise, the typical business continuity planner would be most fortunate to be exposed to anything approaching the equivalent level of education and training resources.

When I first got involved in the mid-1980's with what was to become known as business continuity, the equivalent level of training for what was then known as 'disaster recovery' was clearly not in place. As I recall, there were two or three books, negligible training or peer networking opportunities, and a new industry that was inventing itself in dozens of different places as it went along. That was acceptable twenty years ago.

Fast-forward to 2004: a recent quick search on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) shows 212 entries for “business continuity,” about a third of which are not actually relevant; under “arthroscopic knee surgery,” 287 entries are listed. Scanning the titles and descriptions, I could almost say I could learn how to perform knee surgery from this list. Scanning the business continuity titles, I note there are substantial gaps in what I consider to be core areas.

An example: searching for “business impact analysis” or “business impact assessment” yields a total of 49 entries, but only four of which include more than a mention or brief chapter (disclosure: Rothstein Associates is the Publisher of three of those four works).

One might assume from these examples that there are many reference books on business continuity, but that would be incorrect. First of all, “business continuity” is an entire field, like orthopedics; “business impact assessment” is a specialty within that field, like “arthroscopic knee surgery.” Searching for “orthopedic surgery,” which in itself is a specialty within “surgery,” which is a specialty of medicine, is a more appropriate level of search – which alone yields 1,364 entries!

My point in this analogy is simple: as an industry and profession, Business Continuity has, to date, done a lackluster job of building a common body of knowledge. As George Santayana (1863–1952) observed, “Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” In the field of Business Continuity, I might rephrase this to “those who cannot learn from the experiences – and mistakes – of others are doomed to repeat them.”

Indeed, I believe that the practice of Business Continuity has been handicapped by the limited availability of published reference works. There are exceptions, of course: the Disaster Resource Guide and a handful of other periodicals; the Common Body of Knowledge promulgated by the Business Continuity Institute () and the Disaster Recovery Institute International (), the two principal professional certification bodies; and a small but growing number of books. There are several excellent conferences, symposia and seminars.

As an industry, we have a long way to go. I recall writing the book, *Disaster Recovery Testing: Exercising Your Contingency Plan* in 1994 (). At that time, it was the only book addressing this subject. One other book was published in 1996 (since out of print). I believe that an unexercised contingency plan could be worse than no plan at all. So, the most current book available on the subject of exercising contingency plans was published ten years ago.

Similarly, exactly two books have been published on the subject of auditing business continuity; one in 1989, and one in 2002 (Disclosure: Rothstein Associates published the second book, see ).

Enough about the problem! Let's discuss the opportunities.

As a management consultant and as a publisher of business books and software, I review many manuscripts and book proposals. The concern I have with many of them is that, while the authors are sincere and mostly talented, they must have hung out with Santayana – they are in most cases reinventing the wheel, instead of building on the industry's cumulative knowledge and core competencies. And that cumulative knowledge is substantial – just not readily accessible.

I see an incredible opportunity for the business continuity industry to finally correct this shortcoming, and to burst out of its shell.

I strongly believe that the profession and the industry of Business Continuity should – and could – be vastly more effective. I believe the single most significant reason it has not been more widely embraced by enterprises worldwide is that we, as professionals, have not been especially effective at sharing our knowledge and experience.

If we were university professors, we would be accustomed to turning out articles, lectures, dissertations and books. As employees of corporations, governments, non-profits and other organizations, these endeavors are, as often as not, considered frivolous or nonproductive. Simply put, I propose we turn this model around. I am not suggesting this would be a trivial activity, but I do believe these actions are feasible to some degree in all but the most hard-pressed organizations. For starters:

- For at least two years, every novice contingency planner should have a mentor who has had at least five years of professional experience. While there are mentoring programs in place, they are not widely practiced.
- At least every other year, practitioners should be subject to a structured peer review. To some degree, this is accomplished through BCI's and DRII's certification program, but is not consistently practiced.
- To maintain credentials after three years, every practitioner should either publish an article, or deliver a presentation at a conference or symposium, at least once every two years; the presentation or article should, as practical, address an issue or subject which is novel or not generally documented elsewhere – in other words, not “business continuity 101.”
- Every senior practitioner should serve as a mentor at least one out of every three years.
- In order to qualify as a senior business continuity expert, each practitioner should be published. If only one out of a hundred practitioners wrote a book, there would be no shortage of transferable knowledge. Of course, not everyone has the skill, experience, knowledge and time to write a book by themselves. Collaboration with other professionals or writers would be fine – some of the writings I have been most proud of over the years have resulted from heated debates and discussions with fellow practitioners.

I would be truly excited to see fifty or a hundred new books on business continuity show up. Our profession would benefit greatly.

*This article originally appeared in Continuity e-Guide*

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## **RESPONSE TO PHILIP JAN ROTHSTEIN'S ARTICLE, “BUSINESS CONTINUITY: PUBLISH OR PERISH?”**

By Howard Pierpont

Let me start by saying that I agree with much of what Mr. Rothstein has to say in his article “Business Continuity: Publish or Perish?” He has been an industry bulwark for a number of years. In fact, I remember him manning his one-person booth back when I started business continuity planning in the early 1990s. There is a significant lack of literature, current or otherwise, available in the marketplace in this field. Yes, there are plenty of classes and conferences on BC101, but I would guess that probably 50% of the folks who attend these forums are either at their first BC conference or have been in the profession less than a year. After all, how many people do you know who wanted to be a Business Continuity or Disaster Recovery specialist when they grew up? Most of us arrived at this point by some other circuitous route. Not exactly the clear career path of a firefighter, police officer, EMT or doctor.

Mr. Rothstein hypothesizes that in the academic world everyone wants and needs to publish to show off their area of expertise. Actually, in many of the sciences the theories put forth are based on earlier research and only marginal new findings. Those with breakthrough projects typically team with venture capitalists and publish internally until such time as the product can lead to certification of profitability. There is limited publication to protect the rights and financial viability of the organization. In private industry, these costs are covered by Research and Development. Business Continuity is not considered to be part of this budget and has to be included in some operational area. At this point, in many companies there is still a lack of senior management commitment and likewise the funds are not allocated.

Mr. Rothstein suggests that for the first two years, every novice would have a mentor with at least five years of experience. A couple of minor issues here: if a company has decided to use novices as their starting point, they are unlikely to fund the mentors. If they plan to go with experienced people, they would either contract or hire a professional into the company. A not so subtle difference here is the difference between contract and hire. A company faced with contracting charges is unlikely to fund a couple of novices for two years as they are trying to get their own efforts off the ground. A company hiring an experienced BC professional will want to reinforce their company philosophies and is also unlikely to fund for novices. For most companies there is a perception that Business Continuity is another cost of doing business and there has to be a very positive ROI. For many organizations funding is still a significant issue and associated headcount is running lean and mean. I am not aware of any companies that are interested in funding a mentoring program or paying for people that they will not employ long-term to learn on the job. The bottom line is cost vs. results.

Mr. Rothstein also proposes peer reviews on a bi-annual basis. While I agree this is a nice idea, I wonder who picks the peer reviewers? Where do the reviewers get the time and money to facilitate the effort? Who decides the standard against which the practitioner is judged? Much of the BC effort is really a variation on a theme, some use one tool or platform while others select differing processes. No version is right or wrong as long as the long-term goal is met.

Maintaining credentials after three years by either presenting at conferences or publishing articles is worthy of some additional consideration. Unfortunately, particularly in large companies, the presentation material is watered down by the time it goes through corporate and legal reviews. Most organizations are so protective of their “intellectual property” that they hoard their

resources rather than share for the benefit of the industry. The only forums where issues and processes can be openly discussed usually require nondisclosure agreements! Not exactly an atmosphere conducive to sharing and learning.

As a full time corporate employee with more than five years of BC expertise and a challenging job description, I question when would I have the time to mentor novices? If they were inside my organization, it would probably be built into both my career path and theirs. However, since most companies do not have a large number of dedicated full timers, the likelihood of mentoring opportunities seems relatively slim. Additionally, mentoring of people outside my company would require additional time and energy to meet the travel and business needs of two professionals. I can just hear my manager's challenge on the ROI for that type of venture!

I would like to publish my book. It's been in my head and partly on paper for years. Unfortunately, I have to either leave my current employer and still be subject for review or allow a group of legal people [great lawyers, but they don't know BC] revise and approve my publication. Neither of these are easy choices given today's market.

I would enjoy a lively forum to discuss Business Continuity with my peers in the industry. It would be great to hear the real experiences of practitioners who do not have something to sell me. Vendors in the Business Continuity arena would be well served to fund and promote an individual resource to talk to many groups at no cost about the possibilities offered in any phase of BC or provide forum opportunities featuring industry professional at low to no cost.

Another underdeveloped area is the creation of a university track to support Business Continuity as an advanced field of endeavor. It would be nice if these things were in place before the industry faces judicial mandates that will further strain the need for Business Continuity professionals. Can we really be prepared?

**HOWARD PIERPONT** is a 24+-year employee of Digital Equipment and Intel Corporation. He was recently named Enterprise Platform Group Business Continuity Manager [Worldwide] after completing a successful tour as a Coach with the Intel Safety and Security Initiative - Business Continuity Program Office.

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## **INDUSTRY NEWS**

### **SEC APPROVES NASD AND NYSE BUSINESS CONTINUITY RULES**

"April 16, 2004 - On April 7, the Securities and Exchange Commission approved rules proposed by NASD and the New York Stock Exchange (File Nos. SR-NASD-2002-108 and SR NYSE-2002-35), which require NASD and NYSE members to develop business continuity plans that establish procedures relating to an emergency or significant business disruption.

"Under the new rules, every NASD and NYSE member must develop a plan that addresses various aspects of business continuity, including data back-up and recovery, mission critical systems, and alternate communications between the firm and its employees and the firm and its customers. In addition, a member's business continuity plan must address how the member will assure its customers' prompt access to their funds and securities in the event that the member

determines that it is unable to continue its business. Every NASD and NYSE member also will be required to disclose to its customers a summary of its business continuity plan that addresses how the member intends to respond to potential disruptions of varying scope.”

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## **RECOMMENDED READING**

Subscribers to BUSINESS SURVIVAL™ are offered a free CD-ROM containing, your source for hundreds of books, software tools, research reports and videos since 1989. E-mail your request to with your postal mail address.

Over 50 new book, software and video titles have been added in the past few weeks. New titles described below are a small sampling of the hundreds of resources available at [www.DisasterRecoveryBooks.com](http://www.DisasterRecoveryBooks.com) and [www.ServiceLevelBooks.com](http://www.ServiceLevelBooks.com).

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### **BUSINESS CONTINUITY AND HIPAA: BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT IN THE HEALTH CARE ENVIRONMENT**

By James C. Barnes

Edited by Deborah Barnes, Philip Jan Rothstein, FBCI

(Available: June, 2004).

Endorsed by the Business Continuity Institute(BCI) and  
Disaster Recovery Institute International (DRII).

This book will examine business continuity planning as adapted to encompass the requirements of The Health Care Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, or HIPAA. We will examine the typical business continuity planning model and highlight how the special requirements of HIPAA have shifted the emphasis. The layout of this book was designed to afford assistance, hints, and templates to the person charged with the task of implementing business continuity planning into a healthcare organization.

This book will include the special precautions and procedures that address the unique concerns of HIPAA, but it will present them along with the other business components in order to emphasize the need to take a holistic approach when constructing and maintaining a business continuity plan.

June, 2004, 250 pages (est.). Order #DR733.

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### **BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING METHODOLOGY**

by Akhtar Syed, Ph.D., CISSP and Afsar Syed, BMath, ABCP.

“Although there are many publications that explain business continuity planning, very few provide detailed methods on how to implement it; even fewer cover implementation of all six stages. Business Continuity Planning Methodology is a single, comprehensive, text that explains the principles of business continuity planning and presents an easy to follow step-by-step methodology to implement its six stages. The methodology considers protection of mission critical

business processes, resources, and services. It focuses on key resources such as IT systems and infrastructure, manufacturing and production equipment and products, facilities, work areas, vital records, and critical data. The methodology is consistent with business continuity industry standards, guidelines, and best practices such as ISO/IEC 17799, NFPA 1600, COBIT, and DRI International.”

2004, 315 pages. Order #DR730.

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**CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROTOCOLS FOR BUSINESS:  
A CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEMPLATE ON CD-ROM**

by Douglas Henderson, FSA, CBCP

How do we respond to an emergency?

What are the priorities?

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How do we return to normal operations?

This template identifies step-by-step solutions to these and other important questions. The Plan is designed to provide guidance to the Emergency Response Team and the leaders of the company to respond to an actual crisis event. As such the Plan is written in a concise format that makes it highly useful during an emergency event.

2004, CD-ROM. Order #DR728.

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**CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROTOCOLS FOR COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES:  
A CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEMPLATE ON CD-ROM**

by Douglas Henderson, FSA, CBCP

This template is designed to provide guidance to the Emergency Response Team and the leaders of the institution to respond to an actual crisis event. As such the Plan is written in a concise format that makes it highly useful during an emergency event.

2004, CD-ROM. Order #DR729.

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