

## 11 A Formal Methodology

### 11.1 The Lifecycle Model

In the world of business continuity management (BCM), professionals have used this type of lifecycle model as the basis of a formal methodology, or management system, embracing specialized tools, techniques, and terminology. This general acceptance adds a certain amount of gravitas to the whole procedure and offers a standardized way of achieving clearly defined objectives. In this book, I have developed a parallel set of tools, techniques, and terms which can be applied to EEP to demonstrate that we are pursuing a due process as we carry out our responsibility to protect those who are under our care, visiting, or using our premises.

Within this formal method, you will need to identify or determine exactly where the various associated responsibilities should, or do, lie. We will come back to this aspect in a later section of the book in which we discuss management and control.

**Your sponsor should be someone who “knows the ropes” in the organization.**

### 11.2 Prerequisites

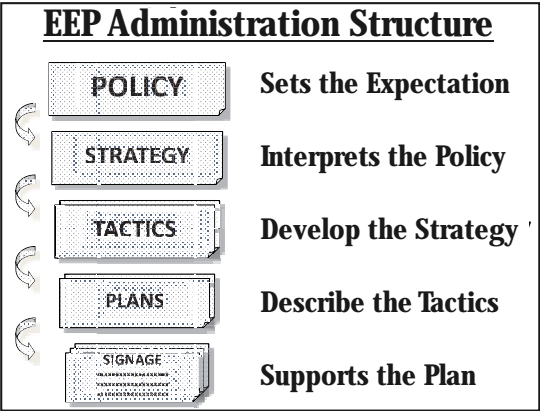
- ▶ **Sign-on and sponsorship:** Before you embark on an EEP you will need authorization. The scope will need to be determined and agreed upon by top management. In addition, your program will require an identified sponsor who can provide the authority to back the work, its requirements, and implications. Your sponsor should be someone who “knows the ropes” in the organization, is skilled at communicating at all levels in the organization, and has the confidence of upper management. This is the person who is to take overall responsibility for emergency evacuation.
- ▶ **Policy:** To formalize this initial phase, you will need to have a documented policy statement which has been signed off by the sponsor. Such a policy should state clearly why the organization is embarking on an emergency planning program, referencing the drivers behind that thinking. Drivers may include such concerns or considerations as corporate responsibility, staff welfare, health and safety legislation, industry guidelines provided by a trade body, or regulations imposed by a regulator.
- ▶ **Scope:** The scope of the accompanying exercise or testing program should also be clearly defined and stated within the policy document. Elements, or dimensions, of the scope may include geographic limitations together with an indication of the type and scale of the scenarios, which the plans are expected to cover.

Ideally, the scope should also include some reference to the type and level of aftercare which should be provided, perhaps in accordance with prescribed individual needs.

- ▶ **Strategy and tactics:** With the policy in place, you will have the authority to proceed with your investigations and move on to develop the strategy and tactics which will meet the aims of the policy. Throughout the rest of the program, you should not only follow the policy but also make sure to refer to it as the source from which the strategy and tactics are derived. Keeping the policy as the reference point in your communications is a clear demonstration of good practice and provides the transparency which is expected of good governance. In the wake of a serious incident, it is almost certain that an inquiry will be held and evidence of due care and attention could become a serious issue. In a court of law or a formal inquiry, the lack of such evidence could be interpreted as negligence at the very least. That negligence would be laid firmly at the feet of whomever is deemed to be responsible for emergency procedures, and that will include you and whomever you report to in this connection.

1.2 Program Management

Because EEP is a long-term program rather than a short-term project, it needs to be approached and managed in a manner consistent with the long life that is to be expected. You and other people will need to produce a series of deliverables, or documents, at milestones along the way. One of the inherent difficulties in this type of work is the tendency to wander off course due to lack of attention to detail, misunderstandings, or forgotten intentions.



Note that in Phase 1 of this methodology, you will not be completing the entire planning and implementation process. Rather, you will be setting up the administrative structure and the milestones for creating and implementing the EEP

### **Case Study: Evacuation by Lucky Escape**

Over the past decade, Excelsium Insurance,\* a 200-employee insurance company, had implemented a typical business continuity program for a company of that size. The company was located a few hundred miles north of the region in the central United States known as “tornado alley,” but it had never suffered from storm-related threats and vulnerabilities. While management was aware of a potential tornado threat, the danger had never seemed “real” – so near and yet so far – and the business continuity program had not addressed it in any kind of realistic detail.

The company had what might be called a one-size-fits-all evacuation plan, conducting all-purpose fire drills for their seven-story headquarters building two or three times a year, evacuating all workers to the parking lot. In practice, the drills were not taken seriously. Floors 1 through Floor 6 always evacuated; employees looked forward to the break. Significantly, Floor 7, the executive level, never did participate, with executives chuckling, “We keep getting these warnings, but even the old-timers can’t remember a tornado actually hitting this town.”

Over time, employees viewed these exercises as nothing more than a convenient excuse to play ball – in fact, they kept a sack of soccer balls handy and looked forward to the “exercise.” When Matilda, an otherwise soft-spoken, mid-level accounting manager who hailed from Oklahoma and had lived through many tornados, wrote a strong memo to the executives expressing her concern that the parking lot was probably the worst place to take refuge in a real tornado, they laughed and called her a “sissy.”

One early spring day, the weather service issued warnings that a large tornado had been spotted in the area. The alarm sounded; tornado evacuation procedures were initiated. A darkening sky suggested that this was not a false alarm. Within minutes, confusion reigned. Suddenly, it was no longer soccer-playing time. Panicked employees quickly recognized that the parking lot was not the place to be as the tornado approached – but it was also clear to them that there was no other place to go. Employees plunged down the stairs toward the exit, only to run headlong into other employees coming back in. Executives looked out the windows and saw the signs of impending doom. They wisely chose to leave the seventh floor and participate – but even they had no idea what to do.

Nobody was in charge. The well-defined and now obviously incompetent all-purpose evacuation procedures were immediately forgotten. In the midst of confusion, seemingly out of nowhere, Matilda realized nobody else was

stepping up to the plate. With a storm approaching and lives at stake, she was soft-spoken no more, drawing on a lifetime of tornado drills in school and at home from growing up in Oklahoma. Very aware of what steps to take in the face of a tornado, Matilda immediately issued commands in a clear, confident voice, quieting and calming her co-workers – some of whom were at risk of being trampled – and quickly and effectively directed employees to relative safety in the lower-level stairwells.

As luck would have it, the tornado veered away and did not come within a mile of the building. If it had come much closer, the impact would likely have been catastrophic. While there were some injuries, none was serious. After that close call, Matilda was invited to the seventh floor to review her earlier memo with all the executives. Today, Excelsium Insurance no longer trusts to luck and an all-purpose evacuation process. The company now has a tornado shelter and fully exercised facility evacuation plan.

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*\* This case study and others are based on actual situations in real enterprises. The names have been changed and, where necessary, some of the details may have been modified in order to maintain the confidentiality of the enterprise.*

## 123Tactics

Tactics are derived from the agreed strategy; it is at this level that you will be developing realistic project plans regarding the ways and means to effect an emergency evacuation.

At the tactical level, you will need to apply your technical knowledge and provide guidance to those above you in the organization. At the same time, you will be expected to work closely with your peers who will probably have a rather down-to-earth pragmatic view of what might go wrong and how people might react. Much of their knowledge and opinions will be derived from practical experience which is, after all, the best source of information regarding what is possible and how best to deal with problems and eventualities.

In contrast to the high-level policy, which is applied to the organization as a whole, the strategy may apply to particular locations or divisions, and the specific tactics would apply to specific sections or areas where people might be found. Thus, plans themselves are aimed at the level of individuals or groups of individuals, while signage is an example of a tactic that is there to support individuals as they find their way along the route towards safety.

often achieved through the appointment of local part-time administrators who are trained and authorized to act as the local representatives for the subject. Within their section or area of activity, these BC administrators are expected to keep the plans and procedures up to date, ensure any special resources are retained and maintained, update their section of the risk register, and promote awareness and interest in the subject. This approach normally includes a central center of competence which these administrators can use as a source of reference and repository for documents, resources, and intelligence. Clearly, these BC administrators could also become useful agents for the EEP program if they were given a little training and some encouragement. They might act, or recommend someone who should act, as evacuation marshals or assistants in the event of an emergency. Apart from that, they could prove to be very helpful to those people in their section or area who need to develop their own PEEPs. Using their local knowledge and accessibility, they could work with those concerned to ensure, or guide, the development of customized plans which take full account of the individuals' needs and the intricacies and nuances of their surroundings.

## 19 Obligations and Responsibilities

Although no commonly accepted international standard for emergency evacuation procedures or signage has been established, obligations remain for employers and property owners to afford a certain degree of safety in the workplace. Generally these obligations are outlined in rules and regulations which impose, refer to, or describe standards in respect to plans and signage regarding emergency evacuation, fire protection, and fire prevention.

**Corporate citizenship and social responsibility should be the driving force behind making the workplace, dwelling, or pleasure area safe for occupants and visitors alike.**

The rules and their observance may vary from one jurisdiction to another. Sometimes they are rigidly enforced and at other times and in other places the regime may be much more tolerant or even lax. The authorities always seem to be more observant and conscientious in these matters in the wake of a major emergency or disaster although the risks do not increase simply because of one well known or publicized local incident. We need to be properly prepared and trained at all times. Disasters do not seem to recognize high and low seasons; they just happen, although there may be a tendency for

particular types of events to occur at certain times of the year. However, there is enough variety and uncertainty to give us cause for concern at all times, enough to justify the precautions which are being promoted here. Corporate citizenship and social responsibility should be the driving force behind making the workplace, dwelling, or pleasure area safe for occupants and visitors alike.

### **191 Legal Obligations**

In most modern jurisdictions, employers and those who are responsible for the management of facilities where people gather for business, pleasure, health, or learning have a legal obligation to conduct risk assessments; to use health and safety signs in areas which may contain hazards; and to ensure that all fire escape routes are properly marked. The details of the relevant legislation may vary, but the principles will remain the same throughout the world.

For the moment you only need to be aware of the fact that there are a host of rules, regulations and standards which you may need to take into account during the development and delivery of your EEP plans and procedures.

You must also appreciate that the weight of the law is behind the need to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of all those who use or visit your premises.