Keep Trading – Discussion Record Sheets

Introduction

This is one of a number of documents to help owners and managers in small and medium sized businesses who want to think about how to protect their businesses from disruptions, small or large, natural or man-made. They can be seen as a practical introduction to managing business continuity, or how to 'keep trading' when trouble strikes.

The Ready Scotland website provides further information and links for those wishing to go further and for firms with more complex needs, such as larger businesses.

Keep Trading – Discussion Briefing

The *Discussion Briefing* is intended to help owners and managers of small and medium sized businesses discuss with colleagues how to protect their businesses from disruptions: how to 'keep trading'.

Keep Trading – Discussion Record Sheets

The *Discussion Record Sheets* (this document) are forms to record the outcomes of meetings based on the *Keep Trading - Discussion Briefing*. They can be used as the basis of a draft business continuity plan.

Keep Trading – Checklist

The *Checklist* is a two page list of hazards that might affect small businesses and questions to ask about your ability to get back to business as normal.

1   <u>What is our business about?</u>

Summarise in one or two sentences:

- What would we want to preserve about our business if it was disrupted or if we needed to restart our business following a disaster?

Consider: What we offer our customers and trading partners? What makes us distinctive?; core products / outputs; secondary activity; style / brand

What we would want to preserve about our business?

2 What do we need to continue our core business activity?

Ask this because the loss of these items might be:
- a cause for disruption or
- a cause of delay to your recovery if the disruption is for other reasons

Consider: different roles and skill mix, how many people? Which locations? Special authority, relationships with customers, suppliers etc

People – what are the main staff groups we need?

Consider: buildings, facilities, utilities: light, heat, power etc

Premises – what accommodation and facilities do we need?

Consider both large and small items

Equipment – what are the main items of machinery / hardware we need?

Consumables / raw materials

Consider: supply chain, including outsourcing, maintenance arrangements, raw materials; outsourcing / sub-contractors

Suppliers and providers – where do we get our raw materials? To whom do we subcontract?

Consider: arrangements to manage processes and to maintain quality; communications systems – staff, public, and suppliers; financial systems; IT systems; information about how to do things; and the data they hold

Systems and processes – what are the main processes carried out? Who manages and maintains these?

Consider: contacts, phone numbers; accounts and financial; contracts; bank and insurance policy details; correspondence / e-mail; procedures – how to do things; data on IT systems, phones, paper etc

Information – what information is essential to conducting business?

3 What could go wrong?

Lots of things <u>might</u> go wrong and cause a disruption, but you cannot plan for everything. If you identify the <u>main</u> potential causes of disruption that are relevant to your business, this will help you:

- reduce the risk of the most serious problems arising, and
- plan responses that you can apply to many different disruptions, even the unforeseen ones.

Concentrate on things that are:

- relevant to your circumstances,
- more likely to happen, or
- would have a more severe impact on business.

Most of the 'dependencies' (or resources, materials and infrastructure) that you use and depend on will fall into one of the groups below, but there may be other items too.

Consider: large-scale temporary staff absence; permanent or long-term loss of staff; loss of key / specialist staff; threats to staff safety; identity theft

Causes of staff absence

Consider: denial of access to site or buildings; effects of flooding; severe weather; fire

Causes of loss of access to, or total loss of, buildings

Consider mains electricity; mains water and sewerage; telephones – landlines / mobile; computer systems, internet or network access; disruption to road/rail/air transport system; availability of oil and fuel

Causes of loss of utilities and related resources

Consider: loss of financial records, contractual documents, undocumented knowledge (staff memories); diary and contacts lists; electronic data and/or hard copy documents

Causes of loss of information and documentation

Consider: theft; vandalism, identity theft / cyber crime; changes to regulations, breach of regulations; criminal acts internal to our business; bomb / terrorism threat

Causes of criminal activity / security failure

Causes of loss or failure of other dependencies
Equipment
Consumables / raw materials
Suppliers & Providers
Systems and Processes
Other

4   Lessen the likelihood of disruption

Consider: more likely to happen or a more severe impact on business

What are the main business disruption risks that we face?
1.
2.
3.

How can we make staff aware of risks of disruption and how we would respond?

Do we have 'all our eggs in one basket', i.e. would removing one person / piece of equipment / step in a process would have disastrous consequences?

Consider: share skills and knowledge; have deputies for key posts; back-up data; identify alternative ways to the same result, e.g. suppliers

How can we address any 'single points of failure'

Consider: different ways of working; have spare capacity for these

How can we strengthen our most vulnerable and most important processes?

Consider areas where a just in time approach is helpful and where it involves risk

Review just-in-time approach

Consider: can preventative maintenance or active risk-hunting help?

Are there less risky methods for some of what we do?

5   <u>Lessen the impact if business is disrupted</u>

Have response and recovery planned in advance

What would we need to do get back to normal quickly?

How would we implement back-up solutions?

6 <u>Responding</u>

Activating the response

How will staff be alerted to a disruption?

How will we activate response arrangements?

Consider: who has authority to make decisions; who is temperamentally suited?

Who will lead the response?

Consider: specialist skills / knowledge; do we need to identify a response team?

Who needs to be involved? Who does what?

How will we get information about the problem (inward communication)

Priorities

Consider: safety; legal issues; communications; staff; equipment; restarting processes; stock; what can we safely defer?

What are our priorities following a disruption?
1.
2.
3.
Defer:

What functions must be restarted first?
Immediately / as soon as possible:
Within one day
Within one week
Within one month

Consider: staff, equipment, IT, premises, external suppliers, etc.

What resources will we need to do this?

Who would manage the rest of the business?

Communication

Consider: staff; suppliers; customers; public; emergency services

With whom would we need to communicate during a disruption?

Consider: what information would we need to provide to each of the groups above? How do we look to an outsider?

What are the key messages / information we would communicate?

7 Next Steps

These notes can be used as the basis of a draft plan – see below

Who will lead on business continuity / resilience?
What measures do we need to put in place to make us more resilient?
When will we discuss this with staff?
When will we review arrangements?
Other actions

Using these notes as a basis of a draft	
Sections in this document	Sections in Keep Trading / Business Continuity Plan
What could go wrong Lessening the likelihood Lessening the impact	Risk reduction plan
Responding	Disaster recovery plan
Next steps	Governance and review of arrangements
The amount of detail and the complexity of your plan will depend on your circumstances. More information is available on the Ready Scotland website	