

Insight aims to provide useful information, links and tips in the areas of Risk Management, Work Health and Safety, Business Continuity Management, and other areas relating to management systems and corporate governance.

This issue:

- Comply Before Complain
- Crafting a successful Business Continuity Program

Comply Before Complain

Change might reasonably be thought of as the defining characteristic of the modern world.

Changing regulatory, trade and economic contexts regularly prompt shifts in how things are done in Australian workplaces. Many work roles and processes would be unrecognisable to workers from only a generation ago, if not less.

However, most people are creatures of habit. We prefer routine and predictability, and generally like to do a task the same way we always have.

This creates a common tension – management introduces a new policy, process or documented requirement in the workplace, and workers grumble and complain and try their hardest to get out of doing it.

It's only human to complain about being asked to adapt ourselves to new requirements. But rather than giving into the knee-jerk reaction, we'd often do better to stop and think first.

A new policy or procedure rarely comes out of the blue without an underlying reason. It's usually a response to an external or internal factor that's been identified as requiring to be managed. While there has probably been



a degree of consultation during the development phase, until it has been implemented and tested, it's impossible to be sure whether it's the right or best response. But unless management and workers cooperate with the process of implementing and testing, it can't be properly assessed.

Therefore, we would advocate a 'comply before complain' approach is adopted when a new or changed policy or process is rolled out. Workers may not immediately understand the rationale behind the change, or the reasons may not have been properly or fully communicated. But unless it's given a chance to operate, any push back is really just resistance to

change rather than a legitimate complaint that the process is flawed. Comply first and test if the new process actually works – then complain if it doesn't.

By all means, seek clarification or raise questions if the new requirement appears to be risky/hazardous or has clearly missed something important. One of the steps that can be glossed over in the design and implementation of a new process is whether or not it introduces a new risk. But if there's no evident risk, give it a test-run.

The 'comply before complain' approach also supports the integrity of the management system. Frequently, procedures as documented do not reflect practices on the ground. Auditors are told on the quiet "the procedure says this, but we do that". This leads to a breakdown in the management system, with neither workers nor managers feeling able to trust it. Instead of creating a predictable workplace, people start doing their own thing and working at cross-purposes in a way that usually creates risk for both the organisation and the workers.

Rather than fostering this unproductive workplace culture, test the new requirements, then complain constructively and suggest improvements if there are problems.

Please [contact QRMC](#) for more information.

Crafting a successful Business Continuity Program

The concept of 'business continuity' is relatively straightforward – identify and plan for possible disruptions, and put in place preventative mechanisms and workarounds to keep the organisation going.

However, there are a number of big picture steps that, if neglected, could mean your business continuity plan doesn't work all that well when called upon.

If you haven't yet developed your business continuity management (BCM) program, or if it's been a while since your BCM program was reviewed, here are some key considerations to help ensure all your planning and preparation is actually effective when the worst happens.

- **Understand the culture** – attempting to develop business continuity plans without understanding the priorities of the organisation (vision and mission) and also the level of acceptance of risk (risk appetite) will result in a poor fit between the detail of the business continuity plan(s) and the organisation's real needs.
- **Understand the operations** – properly understanding how an organisation works is the only way to ensure that 'at risk' or time-sensitive operations are identified and managed in the business continuity plan, while also identifying where non-time-sensitive functions are still important.



- **Develop strategic interlinking** – the business continuity management program and the risk management program need to work hand-in-hand. Without a robust and strategic risk management program effectively reducing the likelihood of disruptive incidents, the business continuity management program cannot be as effective at successfully seeing the organisation through disruptions.
- **Be sensible** – the size and complexity of the business continuity management program should be proportional to the level of risk. If implementing and maintaining the program costs the organisation more than the likely disruption event(s) would, it is not providing good value and overall benefit to the organisation.
- **Tailor to fit** – never attempt to take an off-the-shelf product/template and shoehorn the organisational needs into it. Every business continuity management program needs to be developed to the specific operations and needs of the organisation, or it simply won't work when called upon.
- **Keep it simple** – A critical element as there is always the temptation to try and include micro detail and document low level requirements. A good business continuity plan should guide management in decision making in a crisis. A lengthy and verbose plan that includes pages of theory will never be referred to during an unfolding business disruption.

Giving some thought to these issues when redeveloping or reviewing your business continuity management program can help make it a successful investment rather than a disappointing under-performer.

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