**CONTINUITY 2.0 – A MANIFESTO**

**DEFINITION:**
Continuity 2.0 is a methodology for continuously improving an organization’s response and recovery capabilities, with a focus on the continued delivery of services following an unexpected unavailability of people and/or resources.

**DRIVERS:**
Despite tremendous revolutions in technology, organizational practice, and global business in the last fifteen years, Continuity 1.0 methodology has become entrenched. It has made only small, incremental adjustments, focusing increasingly on compliance and regulations over improvements to organizational readiness. This has led to a progressively untenable state of ineffectual practice, executive disinterest, and an inability to demonstrate the value of continuity programs and practitioners.

**PURPOSE:**
Continuity 2.0 transforms or eliminates the majority of traditional instruction and convention in preexisting best practices of the continuity planning industry. It refocuses the discipline and its practitioners away from outdated and ineffectual “best” practices on to proven practices. Continuity 2.0 better equips continuity practitioners for their work, thereby enhancing their abilities to limit potential damage to organizations’ brand, capital, functions, and revenue following an incident or disaster.

**SCOPE:**
While the principles of Continuity 2.0 may have implications for IT Disaster Recovery, Emergency Management, Life Safety, and related fields, they are targeted for the discipline of Business Continuity. Drawing from the definition, the scope of Continuity 2.0:

- Differentiates Continuity 2.0 from resilience, sustainability, and other related initiatives;
- Establishes boundaries and guidance for discipline, practice, and critique;
- Provides a framework for ongoing involvement with Boards and executives; and
- Allows for immediate, innovative, and valuable improvements.
**PRINCIPLES:**
There are nine principles of Continuity 2.0. No single principle takes precedence over any other, nor is there an expected sequence; together the principles should be applied as holistically as possible. They appear below in alphabetical order.

**DELIVER CONTINUOUS VALUE**
Practitioners should not wait to deliver value all at once, at the conclusion of their preparedness efforts (even if this were possible). Instead, work should build upon itself so that practitioners are continually providing deliverables that are useful to the organization. Continuity 2.0 adopts relevant practices of agile, lean process improvement, and other proven practices to enable continuous incremental value.

Practitioners should create deliverables that can stand alone in manageable chunks. Practitioners should segment work into business relevant outcomes, producing frequent, shorter-term, additive, customer-informed deliverables that provide value early and often.

While value should not be created outside of the sphere of preparedness planning, neither should it be dictated by strict methodology and predetermined deliverables. Deliverables must be informed both by the direct needs of individual department leaders, within an existing situation, culture, and mission, and by the expertise of the practitioner.

Continuity 2.0 discourages a sequential approach. Continuous value, coupled with the core mission of continuous improvements in response and recovery capabilities, leads to the adoption of a non-linear approach that adjusts to ongoing feedback from all participants. The order in which the practitioner delivers value should be dictated by the situation, not the methodology.

**DOCUMENT ONLY FOR MNEMONICS**
The goal of Continuity 2.0 is the continuous improvement of response and recovery capabilities, not the accumulation of documents.

Evidence clearly demonstrates that most people cannot pick up an unfamiliar and complicated plan at time of disaster and use it for an effective and efficient response. Documentation alone must not be the primary guide, desired deliverable, or measure of preparedness efforts.

Documentation serves only to support thinking and discussion involved in preparedness. Each responder must have as much of a visceral, immediate, and intuitive understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and actions required of him or her as possible. Documentation is effective only inasmuch as it provides a reminder of the processes that participants developed and practiced over time.
ENGAGE AT MANY LEVELS WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION
Traditional planning methodology focuses almost exclusively on gaining executive support. This exclusivity of focus follows from the fallacy that the majority of necessary information, resources, and support for a successful continuity program are known and controlled by executives.

Many key individuals from various levels of the organization greatly influence preparedness outcomes. The continuous improvement of response and recovery capabilities requires identifying and gaining the support and ongoing engagement of these key individuals as well as executives.

The practitioner must obtain meaningful information in order to effectively prepare the organization for disaster. Most times such information can only be obtained from front line staff or subject matter experts, and often only after having first built a relationship of trust.

Furthermore, it is not the practitioner or the executives who will be restoring systems and services at time of disaster. Response and recovery will require dedicated effort from people at every level of the organization. These are the people who most need to know the procedures and possess the competencies to continue the organization’s services. Developing these capabilities requires appropriate and ongoing engagement.

EXERCISE FOR IMPROVEMENT, NOT FOR TESTING
Continuity 1.0 standards called for measurements but were unable to offer examples. As Brian A. Jackson of the Rand Corporation notes, “The limits of many of the means of assessing preparedness have led to interest in the use of exercises... As a result, whether or not a plan has been exercised is frequently used as a proxy measure for assessing its preparedness value.”

Business continuity exercises are not reliable measures of recoverability. There are significant limitations in using an exercise to simulate a real disaster, and serious problems in using an exercise to validate an organization’s capacity to hit its defined Recovery Point Objectives (RPOs) and Recovery Time Objectives (RTOs).

Exercises should be used to support the continuous improvement of response and recovery capabilities. They should neither be used as tests of recoverability nor as reviews of planning documentation. As such, the focus of exercises should be to:

- Get comfortable working and making decisions in a (simulated) post-incident or post-disaster environment
- Know the structure and practice the initial actions of designated response teams
- Increase awareness of resources, procedures, and competencies needed to respond and recover
- Identify areas and owners for short- and long-term improvements
LEARN THE BUSINESS
Continuity 1.0 focused practitioners more on strict methodology and prescribed compliance than on the genuine effectiveness of the services they supported. Practitioners did not understand the business and were unable to address the real concerns of executive leadership.

Continuity 2.0 encourages practitioners to learn the mission and culture of each department, and to understand the systems and services involved. Response and recovery processes cannot be bolted on to a department’s pre-existing structure and environment. Alien and artificial processes cannot be easily adopted and will soon be forgotten, thus will likely be discarded at time of disaster. Processes that align with the day-to-day nature of the department will be more effective when most needed.

Practitioners need to establish relationships with those responsible for responding to incidents. The practitioner must be integrated into the culture of the department to provide informed guidance and to periodically review and coach the continual work of improving response and recovery capabilities.

Practitioners must move beyond collecting data about the business, improving their business acumen by learning the vision, mission, and operations of each area within the organization as well as the language of leadership within the context of continuity of services.

MEASURE AND BENCHMARK
Measurement is crucial to Continuity 2.0. Reliable metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) were not addressed in Continuity 1.0. This oversight resulted in an inability to demonstrate the business value of practitioners’ efforts to executives and other key stakeholders.

The final measure of preparedness is the effective response and actual recoverability of a system or service (or a holistic collection of both) at time of disaster. Organizations cannot afford to wait until time of disaster to know to what degree they are prepared to recover from a significant physical or staffing loss.

Measuring an organization’s capability to respond to and recover from an unexpected unavailability does not have to be difficult. Measurement should focus on the following three factors:

- Resources: The degree to which resources that will be required at time of disaster will be available
- Procedures: The degree to which each individual responder fully knows and has internalized his / her duties at time of disaster
- Crisis Competencies: The degree to which each individual responder, operating in conjunction with other responders, will be able to function throughout the duration of the disaster.
Measurements indicate where an organization can invest to improve its capabilities to recover. Benchmarking provides the evidence that such investments have provided the intended results. Practitioners must benchmark existing levels of preparedness as early as possible within an organization, and then again at regular intervals.

Measurement and benchmarking provide a quantitative foundation for Continuity 2.0. In this way the organization can be confident that the developed procedures, additional resources, and improved capabilities are contributing to the desired result – the continuous improvement of response and recovery.

**OBTAIN INCREMENTAL DIRECTION FROM LEADERSHIP**

Continuity 1.0 insisted that the practitioner obtain formal support from executive leadership before any work could begin. Standards dictated that all program objectives be identified, documented, and approved by the executive team before the practitioner could even begin work to prepare the organization.

Continuity 2.0 believes that executive leaders know their business well enough to identify the most critical functions and put the right people in charge of them, thus providing a command and control structure for the preparedness program and its practitioners. Work can begin quickly within individual areas based on the specific needs and knowledge of the accountable and assigned leader in each area.

Using an incremental approach, the practitioner can consistently deliver value and make beneficial course corrections based on regular feedback. The successful practitioner of Continuity 2.0 must carefully navigate competing constraints while ensuring that Board members and senior leaders are aware of their risks for fiduciary accountability, loss of revenues and capital, inadequate or inapplicable insurance, and impact to brand. Practitioners should partner with individual leaders to determine the most effective and efficient actions and investments that will improve the organization’s capability to respond to and recover from disaster, while keeping such efforts aligned in the context of business priorities.

**OMIT THE RISK ASSESSMENT AND BUSINESS IMPACT ANALYSIS**

The risk assessment (RA) and the business impact analysis (BIA) form the backbone of Continuity 1.0. They are considered fundamental components in virtually every best practice guide and industry standard. Employing these two practices leads practitioners along a trajectory that further entangles their work in the many related techniques of Continuity 1.0, along with the negative outcomes of these techniques. Practitioners should eliminate the use of the risk assessment and business impact analysis.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

The results of a risk assessment may lead the practitioner, leadership, participants, and organization as a whole to prepare for and mitigate threats that never materialize while other non-identified threats materialize instead. Preparing for the wrong threats is a waste of resources and may lead to a false sense of security that further
jeopardizes the organization. Other threats can be known and mitigated but still materialize, such as cyber attacks, disgruntled employees, and utility or infrastructure disruptions. It is precisely because bad things will happen, despite the best efforts of very capable risk managers, that continuity planning is so critical. (See additional points in “Prepare for Effects, not Causes.”)

There are also significant liabilities for continuity practitioners who do not possess the training and expertise to properly implement and follow through on a risk assessment. Risk assessment is a technique of risk management, a discipline with its own body of knowledge apart from business continuity. Administering a proper risk assessment and implementing the resulting action items may necessitate deep knowledge of actuarial tables, information security, insurance and fraud, state and federal regulations, seismological and meteorological data, and the law. Typical continuity practitioners do not possess such deep knowledge; those who do are most likely specifically trained as risk managers. Continuity 2.0 practitioners as such should eliminate the risk assessment from their scope of responsibility.

**BUSINESS IMPACT ANALYSIS**

The purpose of a formal business impact analysis is to identify an organization’s services along with the potential daily or hourly loss, usually in terms of money, that a disruption of the service would have on the organization. Over time, the purpose of a BIA has changed, expanded, and become indistinct. The term BIA now often includes recovery time objective (RTO) and recovery point objective (RPO) data, response and recovery strategies, upstream and downstream dependencies, and other information.

The BIA as a measure of estimated losses should be abandoned. Its main purpose was to help leadership identify the most critical services and to set a prioritization for continuity planning efforts. The discipline should eliminate the BIA because:

- The goal of quantifying the impact of disaster is likely a non-starter from the beginning. Rainer Hübért’s article, “Why the Business Impact Analysis Does Not Work,” makes a compelling argument for the industry to abandon the practice of BIA work entirely because of the “very costly and even fatal misinterpretations and misrepresentations” inherent in the process.
- Executive leadership can be trusted to identify critical services based on their experience and knowledge of the organization (as discussed in “Obtain Incremental Direction from Leadership”). Individual leaders can set general direction and prioritization for preparedness planning.

Because of the increasingly nebulous and confused understanding of the term BIA, along with the many connotations and associations that the term has within the tradition of Continuity 1.0, both the practice and term itself should be entirely abandoned in Continuity 2.0.
**PREPARE FOR EFFECTS, NOT CAUSES**

Continuity 2.0 focuses on the three major effects of an incident:

1. Unavailability of location
2. Unavailability of people
3. Unavailability of resources (physical or virtual)

A vast number of circumstances and combinations of cascading events can lead to one or all of these effects. An organization cannot responsibly afford to plan for so many causes. Fortunately, a relatively robust response and recovery strategy can be generated and effectively executed from a short list of intelligently combined options.

The organization can mix and scale a portfolio of response and recovery processes as the incident unfolds and the situation changes. Often the response to effects can be relatively simple if staff is trained to evaluate from among a short set of known options and then act as agreed upon in advance. This allows the organization to remain flexible and efficient in its management of the incident.

---

*The Continuity 2.0 Manifesto was authored in the fall of 2015 by:*

*David Lindstedt, PhD and Mark Armour*
**POSTSCRIPT**

We should expect Continuity 2.0 to evolve.

This is neither a principle nor a corollary derived from the nine principles, though it should not be surprising given the nature of the Continuity 2.0 methodology and its focus on flexible and incremental approaches to produce continual value.

Continuity 2.0 should remain open for critique and improvement, serving as an ongoing proven practice, with hopes that an orderly, structured, and systematic approach can be established to support it.

**COROLLARY: CONTINUITY 2.0 IS NOT RESILIENCE**

While commentators and academics will deduce many corollaries from the original nine principals of Continuity 2.0, this one is of such particular import that it should be called out from the start.

Continuity 2.0 is not “resilience.”

Resilience is an inter-discipline. Resilience does not represent a discipline in its own right; rather it connects theoretical and practical tools from a set of disciplines in a unique way and therefore warrants its own sphere of study, practice, writing, funding, and subject matter experts.

Organizational and community resilience is in an uncertain state at present. There is a great deal of debate as to which disciplines resilience should pull from and how to measure its effectiveness. Continuity planning is one discipline among many that will likely contribute to the inter-discipline of resilience. But business continuity should no more morph into resilience than should IT DR, cyber security, risk management, sustainability, or strategic planning become resilience.
## APPENDIX A: SUMMARY MATRIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Continuity 1.0</th>
<th>Continuity 2.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deliver Continuous Value</td>
<td>Practitioners dictate the work according to sequential methodology and provide documentation at the end of long cycles</td>
<td>Customers direct the work according to needs and culture; practitioners provide frequent, shorter-term, customer-informed deliverables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document only for Mnemonics</td>
<td>Practitioners create documents as final and required deliverables</td>
<td>Customers create documents as mnemonics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage at many Levels within the Organization</td>
<td>NA (Practitioners focus buy-in efforts exclusively on executives)</td>
<td>Practitioners consciously engage many people at many levels of the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise for Improvement, not for Testing</td>
<td>Auditors conduct exercises as a test of the ability to recover within RTO targets</td>
<td>Departments participate in exercises to practice and improve response and recovery capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn the Business</td>
<td>Practitioners collect data about the business</td>
<td>Practitioners strive to understand the culture and operations of individual organizational areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure and Benchmark</td>
<td>Practitioners count the numbers of documents, exercises, and refresh dates</td>
<td>Practitioners and customers measure preparedness and recoverability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain Incremental Direction from Leadership</td>
<td>All executives approve the complete scope of the program before launch</td>
<td>Individual executives provide iterative direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omit the Risk Assessment and Business Impact Analysis</td>
<td>Practitioners require completion of RA and BIA documents before planning can begin</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for Effects, not Causes</td>
<td>Experts focus externally: Identifying and preparing for a host of specific threats</td>
<td>Departments focus internally: Improving response and recovery capabilities for the unavailability of locations, people, and resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Properly we could consider there being only two categories of effects, people and resources, as location can indeed be classified a sub-element of resources. However, actual practice in the field has shown that customers understand the work better, are more receptive, and are more engaged in the process if the practitioner calls out location as a separate category.