PLANNING YOUR BUSINESS RECOVERY

Don’t waste the downtime!
If your shop or business is idle right now, use the time to organize. Is there a corner, shelf, delivery area, or spare room that you’ve been meaning to get to for months (or years!) to get straightened up? Do it now! Clean it up, straighten it around or throw it out! Maximize your ability to use your workspace to its best potential and productivity.

Inventory!
Take the time to make a full listing and accounting of all equipment, machinery, appliances, and material on hand. Is it perishable? Is it preservable? How long can you fill orders with the material you have on hand when you re-open? What would you need to get back to full operations? What do you need first? Then plan an initial order.

Evaluate!
Begin analyzing your business processes. The priorities of your recovery plan should directly connect to your business priorities. So what are your priorities? At a basic level, this business impact analysis assesses which systems and applications are most critical to your organization’s functioning. This is a multi-level assessment; understanding the pieces that enable the crucial operations that run your business, and then which of those pieces are most vulnerable to threat, loss, or shortage? Your business impact analysis and risk assessment should include both.

Plan your Strategy!
Your strategy is a high-level evaluation that looks at how your recovery plan meshes with the NYS re-opening proposal, how the two fit into your business objectives and what it will take to make your plan successful. It should consider things like:

• Results from your self-evaluation, business impact analysis, and risk assessment
• Budget – what do you have and what do you need?
• Resource availability: what people, technology, and other physical assets can or should be included in the recovery plan, and how can you ensure their availability when necessary?
• Technology: what tools will you use to support your recovery plan?
• Data: how specifically is data handled and protected as part of your plan?

Write the Plan!
Your business recovery plan is the execution arm of your strategy. It translates your objectives into a tangible checklist of steps to follow to ensure that your business is protected. It should include:

• The “why”: the objectives and goals driving the plan
• The “what”: your critical IT systems, prioritized by business impact and risk, as well as their expected recovery times, authentication tools, etc.
• The “who”: the roles and responsibilities of each involved person.
• The “when”: Clearly define the timeframes by which tasks must be completed or implemented.
• The “where”: any geographical considerations, including the availability of material for ordering
• The “how”: specific action steps required to restart, reconfigure, and recover. This will also include technological considerations, such as the use of data backup tools.

Test your plan!
Like any good plan, creating it is just the first step. Testing it to ensure that it works is critical to its success! This step is notoriously neglected. Annually, only 40% of companies test their plan, and more than a quarter test “rarely or never.” Why? It can be time-consuming, complex, and resource-intensive. It can also, however, identify gaps, incorrect assumptions, technology issues, process inadequacies, missing elements, plan inconsistencies, human resource problems, and more – all of which could play an indispensable role when it’s not a drill.