



# 5 Pitfalls to Avoid If You Are Concerned That Your BC/DR Strategy is Inadequate

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Like many of your peers, your business continuity plan may be weak or even non-existent. Worse yet, you may feel that it's your fault. Well, good news, it's probably not – **but it will be if you don't do anything about the lack of a BC plan now.**

The simple truth is that naturally occurring disruptive events are becoming increasingly common. [According to the UN's disaster-monitoring system](#), the number of natural disasters has more than quadrupled since 1970. Globally, these disasters (which include earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and other storms) **now number around 400 each year**. The United States, along with China and India, are the areas hardest hit by these disasters. Still, as alarming as these numbers are, they are *not* the most common cause of downtime for businesses.

Data collected by [the business continuity experts at Zerto](#) show that 76% of responding companies had experienced an outage in the past year. Of those outages, **86% were caused by something other than a natural disaster**. So while the number of destructive storms may be on the rise, they are only one of the things we must prepare for as we begin planning a BC/DR strategy – and according to this report, those storms aren't even the biggest thing we need to worry about when it comes to downtime in our business.

## Why Business Continuity Strategies Fail

There are 5 common reasons why business continuity strategies often fail – sometimes before they even have a chance to be deployed.

1. The process takes too long
2. The process for BC/DR planning has no timeline, or no repercussions for not meeting one
3. The assessment work needed to create a BC strategy is not a leverageable investment
4. The provider you choose is not “technology agnostic”
5. The company you partner with does not have the necessary experience

**Any of these reasons can sink your BC/DR plans**, and a combination of these factors is all but certain to spell doom for your strategy. Let's take a deeper look into these five business continuity pitfalls, along with how each can be avoided in your own BC planning.

## 1. The Process Takes Too Long

The most common reason why BC plans fail to get off the ground is because they simply take too long to get going.

Business continuity often becomes a priority for a company once they have experienced a failure that results in a business interruption. [According to the Institute for Business and Home Safety](#), 25% of companies do not reopen after being impacted by a major disaster, whether it is natural or man-made. If your company has experienced downtime due to an event and been fortunate enough to come out OK, creating a BC plan to avoid future interruptions will likely become a very important initiative.



**25 percent of businesses  
don't open again after a major disaster**

Credit: 1

Other times, the impetus to get a BC plan up and running is because there is an extreme weather event in the forecast, and that event puts business continuity on the mind of your company's executive team. Regardless of the reason why BC/DR has become a priority in your organization, it now falls on the IT department to figure out how to get this plan in place.

As you start to dig into what it takes to establish a comprehensive business continuity strategy, you will find that it is an extensive and complex endeavor. At this point, you may decide to seek out a company to partner with for this initiative - a search process which takes time. Then, once you decide on a company to work with, their process adds more time to the overall schedule. Making matters worse, in many cases these companies do not even have a firm timeline which they are adhering to (more on that shortly).

**As more time goes by without a BC plan in place, the chances of your initiative falling apart become greater and greater as management's focus moves on to other things.** The way to combat this is to recognize up front that business continuity is too complex an endeavor to tackle on your own. Begin your process by working with a partner that has fast turnaround times. This means that they are able to get "boots on the ground" quickly once you have expressed interest in their services. It also means that their process is well established and proven. They should be able to move the process forward quickly to prevent a plan from falling apart because the engagement drags on and takes too long to be mobilized.

So, how long should BC planning take? Let's look at that next...

## 2. The Process for BC/DR Planning Has No Timeline - Or No Repercussions For Not Meeting a Timeline

When you begin working with a partner to establish a business continuity strategy, you should know from the beginning how long the process should take, and as we have just discussed, you should be looking for a proven process that includes quick turnaround times.

Establishing a BC strategy should not take months. Done correctly, **you should be able to go from not having a BC plan to having a strategy ready to mobilize in about 30 business days.** That may sound like an unrealistic turnaround time for this complex process, but it's not. In fact, this rapid response and delivery time is what you should demand in order to keep your plans on track.



One example of quick turnaround times in a BC process is Envision Technology Advisors' "[Business Continuity Solution Accelerator](#)." The BCSA is delivered in just 30 business days. Envision even guarantees this timeline by offering that if the deliverables are not produced on schedule, the assessment is done at no cost to the client.

This offer illustrates another important point when it comes to BC project timelines. It's important for the company you partner with to have a timeline, but there must also be repercussions if they do not meet that timeline. Without penalties for not sticking to an agreed upon schedule, you are taking too big a risk that what you were promised during the sales process will not prove to be reality, and your BC/DR effort will stall.

### 3. The Assessment Work Needed to Create a Business Continuity Strategy is Not a Leverageable Investment

The first steps in going from not having a business continuity strategy to having a plan to implement is to assess your company’s current infrastructure, interview your team, gather requirements for Recovery Point Objective (RPO) / Recovery Time Objective (RTO)\*, and ultimately create design recommendations based on your specific needs. This assessment process requires an investment. **To ensure that you get the most for your money, you should be looking for an investment that is leverageable.**

Once the design recommendations for a BC plan are presented and reviewed, the next step in this process will be the implementation of those recommendations. This means an additional investment, but if some of the money you spent on the assessment project can be credited towards the implementation, you will stretch your dollars and make your budget go further. Even though all BC plans start with an assessment period, not all companies offer this advantage of a leverageable investment. Look for one that does and do more with the budget you have for your BC initiative.

*\*Interested in more details on RPO, RTO, and what the differences between these two important metrics are? Zerto has put together [a helpful infographic](#) to explain RPO & RTO.*

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## DR101: RPO & RTO Explained

Disaster Recovery isn't just about protecting yourself from natural disasters. Ultimately, it's about ensuring that whatever happens to your IT infrastructure, your business won't suffer extended downtime. Enter RPO/RTO.

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### RPO

*Recovery Point Objective*

The last point-in-time that IT systems and applications can be recovered to. RPO is dictated by the replication technology used.

*Backups, Storage Replication, Continuous Data Replication*

### RTO

*Recovery Time Objective*

How quickly applications are recovered and operations are resumed. RTO is influenced by the level of manual vs automated recovery processes.

*Boot Ordering of VMs, Re-directing Network Traffic, Recovering Application Stacks Consistently*

4 HOURS      4 HOURS      4 HOURS

## Time really is money

Data Loss + Downtime + Data Entry

Replication Technology	RPO	RTO	Financial Impact
Daily Backups	24 Hours	24 Hours	\$821,917
Storage Replication	4 Hours	4 Hours	\$136,986
Continuous Data Replication	20 Seconds	15 Minutes	\$2,980

\*Based on a \$100M company

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It takes 20 years to build a reputation and 5 minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently. -Warren Buffett

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## 4. The Provider You Choose is Not “Technology Agnostic”

In too many instances, IT providers recommend technologies because they are being rewarded for doing so. Those technologies may meet your needs, but are they truly the *best* fit for your company? When you review the design recommendations being presented as part of a BC/DR assessment, you want to be sure that the proposed technologies are, indeed, the best solution for your specific needs. To achieve this, you must select a partner who is “technology agnostic.”

As you assess different companies for your BC/DR initiative, ask them whether their sales team accepts “spiffs” from their partners. This is an incentive that many companies give to sales teams in order to help push their products or solutions. While this practice may be common in the IT industry, **it is not in the best interest of your company to work with a sales team that operates in this way.**

Consider this scenario – as part of your BC needs, you must decide on a solution for cloud backup. There are a few different providers for this offering that your partner is considering for their recommendations. One of those providers is offering the team financial rewards for every license they sell. Whether or not this solution is the best fit for you, that sales team is likely to select it because they are incentivized for doing so. That is a scenario you will want to avoid.

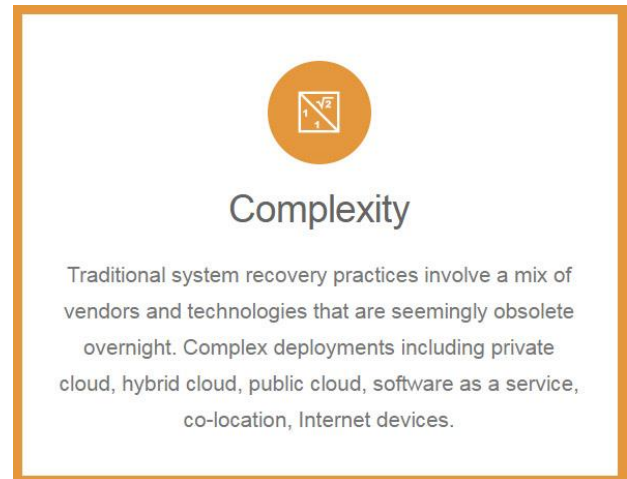
Being “technology agnostic” means that a company works with a variety of providers and partners, but they recommend solutions for each project based on what is best in that specific instance. The company may have some solutions that they lead with and favor over others (for technical reasons), but at the end of the day they are not being paid to push specific solutions. This means you can rest easy knowing that any recommendations made were based on merit and not financial incentives for salespeople.

The hallmark of a technology agnostic company is that they are likely engineering led. This means that the sales reps are not only unable to receive spiffs, they are likely not allowed to recommend specific technologies at all! More often than not, the technology agnostic company has a technical design team and engineering organization behind sales that architects the solutions.

## 5. Your Partner Does Not Have the Necessary Experience

As we said at the beginning of this piece – business continuity is an extensive and complex endeavor. In [a report created by IDC](#), “complexity” was actually the primary reason given for why “data protection and business continuity remain so difficult.”

Taking you from no BC/DR strategy to a plan that can be implemented to protect your company when disaster strikes requires a partner who has deep and diverse experience. If your current IT provider does not specialize in BC/DR, but you decide to work with them anyway because you have been happy with them in the past, you are doing yourself a disservice. That company may be able to help with many of the recommendations that are presented as part of the BC plan, but **you still need to engage with a company who are experts in business continuity to establish that plan in the first place.**



Experience goes beyond just being experts in business continuity. You should also look for a partner that offers a range of complimentary solutions, as well as one who has experience providing those solutions to a variety of different companies and industries. This experience will prove to be invaluable in your BC/DR planning and your company will reap the benefits of partnering with a team who can draw on their experiences to design and deploy the ideal strategy for you.

As you assess different companies who you are considering for your business continuity needs, do not be shy about asking for concrete examples of where they have successfully deployed similar solutions in the past. Don't just request general references – demand relevant and detailed examples of their BC/DR expertise in action to ensure that the team you eventually decide on is the right one for the job.

### In Closing

It's not your fault that your company does not have a strong business continuity strategy in place today – **but it is your responsibility to get the right one in place as soon as possible.** Get on the path to a BC/DR strategy with a Business Continuity Solution Accelerator from Envision Technology Advisors and have a plan ready to mobilize in just 30 business days. Contact Envision at [info@envisionsuccess.net](mailto:info@envisionsuccess.net) or by calling **401-272-6688** to get started.

Envision Technology Advisors provides business and technology consulting solutions throughout the United States. In addition to BC/DR solutions, Envision are also experts in cloud and managed service, virtualization solutions, infrastructure and network consulting, cybersecurity, and website design, development, and digital strategy consulting.

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