STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Overview

CHALLENGE

Murdoch University needed a comprehensive, yet easy-to-understand approach to developing, implementing, and monitoring emergency, continuity, and recovery actions in response to disruptive incidents.

SOLUTION

With guidance, including the ASIS Business Continuity Standard, the university was able to define its risks, develop incident and business continuity plans, and implement an ongoing review process to evaluate the programs.

OUTCOME

Murdoch University has audited resilience plans in place, as well as training and exercises to keep staff current. The university can alert staff and students quickly and easily when trouble is detected. Leaders continually assess what works and what doesn't, refining the continuity and resilience plans accordingly. The university is prepared.

BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE AT MURDOCH UNIVERSITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Headquartered in Perth, Australia, with campuses in Western Australia, Singapore, and Dubai, Murdoch University has established a mature Critical Incident and Business Continuity Framework. In partnership with internal and external stakeholders, and using best-practice guidance including the *ASIS Business Continuity Management Systems Standard*, the university's Critical Incident Management Advisory Committee introduced:

- A Business Impact Analysis and Risk Assessment Program to scope and understand the university's diverse risk and disruption impact profile;

- An innovative and engaging Resilience Training and Exercise Program to drive individual and collective incident management knowledge and skills growth; and

- A Continuous Review and Performance Improvement Development Program to cultivate opportunities for framework enhancement.

Tailored to the organization's culture, these programs have validated and enhanced Murdoch University's resilience.

CHALLENGES

Universities often experience complications in translating critical incident and business continuity requirements into practice. Interpreting and validating framework requirements from multiple (and sometimes conflicting) external references can be time-consuming and complex. Furthermore, it can be challenging to understand how these requirements should be applied to the specific operational and strategic profile of each university. Schools and departments within large universities do not usually have ready access to guidance that clearly explains their role in developing, implementing, and monitoring emergency, continuity, and recovery actions in response to disruptive incidents.

THE SOLUTION

Alongside other professional guidance, the ASIS/BSI BCM.01-2010 Standard was pivotal in Murdoch University's achievement of a mature Critical Incident and Business Continuity Framework. The Standard provided a comprehensive, yet easy-to-understand roadmap for delivering a mature framework that aligns with the university's organizational profile. Essentially the standard helped:

- Establish a Business Impact Analysis and Risk Assessment Program to determine, and regularly review, potential impacts to the university arising from disruptive events. For example, the standard's description of this process informed the design of school and office surveys to gather vital business continuity data. Through this program, the university identified and assessed a diverse range of disruption risks and subsequently developed response, continuity, and recovery actions to mitigate their impacts on the organization's academic, research, and professional functions.

- Design a Resilience Exercise and Testing Program that fits the university's maturity. The standard explained how capability development programs should be aligned with the university's organizational structure, operating activities, and past incident experience while reflecting input from external stakeholders. The standard also helped form a tiered-training approach across the four exercise types (orientation, tabletop, functional, and full-scale) that guides individual and collective skill progression.

- Implement a Continuous Review and Performance Improvement Program. Using the standard's guidance on nonconformity, corrective action, and preventative action, the management committee regularly reviews framework performance, as well as outcomes from exercises and real-life incidents, to ensure that capability gaps are addressed and the university meets best practices. For example, this program enhanced existing staff and student traveler incident management protocols.

OUTCOMES

The outcomes from these framework programs, informed by the ASIS standard, include:

- New critical incident and business continuity plans that cover a wide range of university incident scenarios (both on and off-campus). These plans have been checked and audited by Western Australian government agencies and are aligned with higher education best practice.

- New emergency and incident management tools that support plan implementation, such as:

  - An emergency response and safety mobile application for staff and students;

  - A travel risk advisory and alert service for the university's domestic and international travelers; and

  - A unified mass communications platform for university-wide incident messaging.

- A Critical Incident Management Training Portal that educates and orientates relevant staff. The online portal contains animation videos, instructional aids, active learning exercises, and interactive quizzes to induct staff into the Critical Incident and University Continuity Framework. At present, there are more than 50 professional and academic staff with critical incident and university continuity management responsibilities conducting portal training.

- Five desktop and functional exercises were held with role-players and external participants to test and improve resilience plans. Simulated scenarios included an on-campus mass casualty event, an international terrorist incident, a bushfire, a gas explosion, and an earthquake.

- The completion of incident reviews and subsequent action plans, steered to completion by the management committee. These actions created positive outcomes beyond the Critical Incident and University Continuity Framework, helping to inform enhancements in welfare management, health and safety, information governance, and human resource management.

Because of these initiatives, Murdoch has further built on its proactive approach to critical incident management and business continuity, demonstrating a real commitment to look after the university community if severe events occur.

A note about the *Business Continuity Management Systems* (BCM) Standard, referenced as the model in this case study:

Last year, two legacy ASIS standards, Business Continuity Management Systems (BCM) and Organizational Resilience: Security, Preparedness, and Continuity Management Systems (SPC.1), were combined and reissued as Security and Resilience in Organizations and Their Supply Chains—Requirements with Guidance (ORM.1), helping to unify the approaches in both under a risk-based framework. While the BCM is no longer available as such, the framework outlined by the standard is valid. We encourage readers to refer to the ORM.1 for implementation of strategies outlined in the BCM.

ASIS International
Standards & Guidelines
Building Organizational Resilience

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