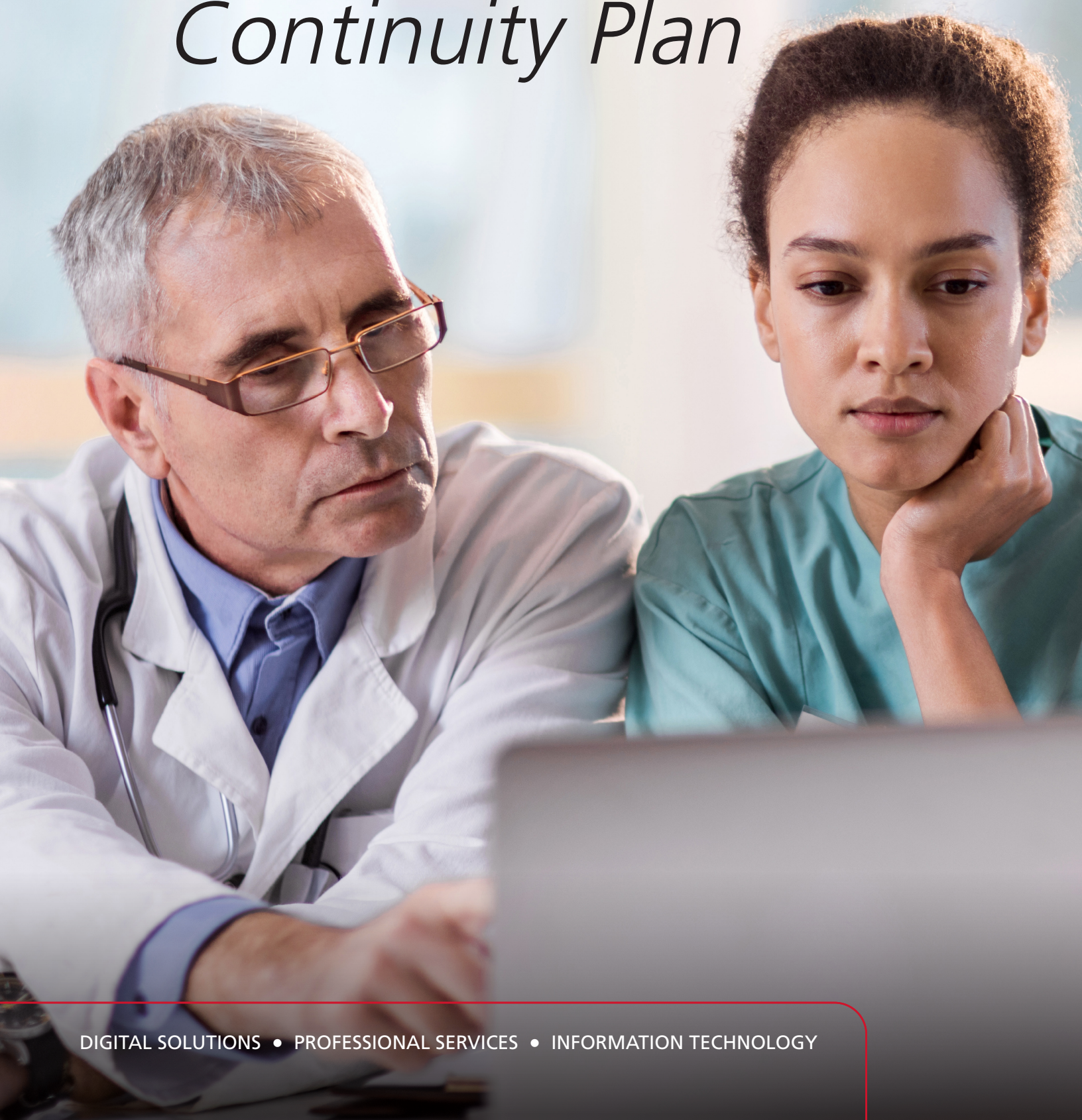


5 REASONS

You Need a Continuity Plan

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Introduction

If there's one industry that simply can't stop normal day-to-day operations, it's healthcare. Any disruption to healthcare business continuity can literally cost lives. Here, we'll outline:

- Why Business Continuity Plans are crucial for healthcare providers.
- How to identify the most common gaps in your existing plan.
- The monetary cost and health risks of potential disruptions.
- Survival: How patient demand changes during disruption.
- Tips for crafting the smartest and most pragmatic Business Continuity Plan for your Healthcare Delivery Organization (HDO).

History shows disruptions in business continuity have deep, lasting impacts on healthcare facilities and the communities they serve. Unlike other businesses, shutting down or reducing operations is not an option for HDOs.



Business Continuity 101

What is Business Continuity?

A Business Continuity Plan is an ever-evolving strategic document outlining how your business will operate in the most difficult of circumstances. It provides actionable insights for various events that may cause teams or your HDO to slow or cease productivity.

Why Business Continuity is important

Business disruption can occur for several reasons, including:

- **Natural disaster:** The types and frequency of more severe natural disasters has increased significantly during the last few years. Now areas that rarely experienced natural disasters are facing them on regular basis. When a natural disaster hits, infrastructure can be affected and HDOs can be out of commission for days, weeks, or months. Business Continuity Planning helps to ensure that employees have access to important information, key systems, and tools from anywhere.
- **Health-related pandemic:** As we've learned over the past two years, ongoing and widespread health-related events tax HDOs in unexpected ways. Having a plan in place will help ease the burden when we experience something similar in the future.

- **Mass casualty events:** Having a plan in place for emergent mass casualty events helps avoid chaos and confusion, streamlining efforts and routing resources appropriately.
- **Infrastructure failure:** Even in the best conditions, the newest equipment can fail, which may result in a complete loss of important data hosted on-site. Business Continuity Planning ensures no digital data is lost.
- **Hacks and cyberattacks:** When outside agents access sensitive HDO data, it's rarely for positive reasons. Business Continuity backups ensure important data is accessible when someone tries to hold it for ransom or when the data get corrupted.
- **Human error:** We all make mistakes. Sometimes those mistakes can have widespread, potentially damaging effects. Routine backups, well-designed procedures and easily recoverable data mean even the worst human errors are not a big deal.



1. Why Business Continuity is Critical for Healthcare Providers

Business as usual in unusual circumstances

Healthcare can't stop. Patients continue to need care, and disruptive circumstances often mean an increased demand placed on healthcare facilities and staff. Slowing or stopping operations is not an option; Business Continuity Plans are vital for healthcare providers.

Staff must be supported.

- When things seem dire, staff need to know leadership is ready with an actionable plan which is well thought, constantly updated, and rehearsed periodically.
- A well-designed, immediately actionable plan means everyone can quickly assume new or expanded roles as needed to meet unique demands on the short and long-term.

Patients need the same level of care.

- Whether the "disaster" affects patients or not, disruption to services will.
- People depend on healthcare providers to be able to help no matter what. Meeting those needs is critical.

- Patients affected by natural disasters need immediate, acute care. In these moments, it's important to have a plan ready to be activated to provide the best care possible.
- Allowing ransomware or hacks to take a facility down affects all patients.

Unknowable disasters need multiple plans.

- Plan for every imaginable scenario.
- There's no such thing as an unnecessary plan.
- Even the most unlikely situations can happen. Having a plan in place for those events speaks volumes to your leadership and foresight.



2. Your existing plan isn't enough

You probably haven't considered all the angles

Many hospitals have disaster recovery plans for data security but rely on the ingenuity of staff to handle moments when patient care is disrupted. This introduces the element of human error, which can have unforeseen consequences.

Plan for an uncertain tomorrow, today.

- Crafting a Business Continuity Plan when times are calm helps you consider all angles.
- Giving yourself the time and space to think through all possibilities and scenarios means when disaster hits, you're ready.
- The plan needs to be constantly updated and rehearsed periodically.

Craft a plan just after the worst is over.

Now is a great time to craft a Business Continuity Plan for your healthcare facility.

- A global health-related event is past its worst phase, but the hurdles faced early on are still top of mind.
- It's almost certain we will see similar issues arise in the future. Learning from these events now matter most.

Planning for several potential issues where business-as-usual can be disrupted is the smart move.

Consider possible and improbable scenarios when crafting Business Continuity Plans. Knowing how an HDO will operate in every circumstance means everyone will be able to avoid stressors and remain performant with a plan crafted in calmer times.

- Help from a partner can make all the difference.
- Crafting a Business Continuity Plan should be done with the help of professionals.
- Accessing outside expertise provides a clear-eyed look at what your HDO may need when problems arise.



2. Your existing plan isn't enough

You probably haven't considered all the angles



Ricoh's own experience is a great example of how a well-crafted Business Continuity Plan helped staff at several offices worldwide ease back into the office.

- The team crafted a comprehensive playbook for leadership and staff, detailing protocols for returning to the office, calling special attention to changes, and new requirements.
- Through engagement during the execution of the plan helped staff feel supported in their return to the office.
- Documenting changes during the implementation of the continuity plan helped everyone receive the same message, avoiding confusions and assumptions.
- Ricoh found staff were more comfortable returning to work, even if they were remote and just coming in for a day or two.
- State and local regulations were adhered to and Ricoh was able to cut costs while aligning its real estate portfolio for potential changes in the future.
- In a time when business disruption is assumed, Ricoh's continuity plan increased employee satisfaction.

3. The true cost of disruption for healthcare facilities

It's not always monetary

People tend to think of a disrupted business in terms of lost revenue streams and angry customers. For healthcare providers, it's much more serious. Disruptions can mean diminished care and may even mean loss of life for patients.

The Institute's Top Health Industry Issues of 2021 report shows:

43% of IT respondents say their HDO experienced a ransomware attack.

- 45% believe the attacks resulted in disrupted patient care.
- 71% reported longer hospital stays for patients because of the attack.
- 70% said procedures and tests were delayed.
- 65% noted increased patient transfers and diversions.
- 36% said patients had increased complications from procedures.
- 22% said mortality rates increased.

Only 40% of respondents say their HDO "always" completes risk assessments on third parties before choosing to work with them.

- Many hacks and ransomware attacks come via third-party vendors and platforms.
- Not knowing who you're doing business with — or their risk exposure — exposes you and your patients to risk.
- Risk assessment should be part of an umbrella Business Continuity Plan.



94% of provider executives, 92% of life science executives, and 91% of health plan executives say improving the clinician experience is a priority.

4. What patients really want

When trouble hits, patients' wants and needs change almost immediately

The past few years have seen virtual doctor visits and telemedicine morph from nice-to-have additives to must-have services for patients. Many providers were caught off-guard and were unprepared to pivot quickly to a new way of providing care.

Patient desire for virtual healthcare is expected to accelerate even after we are officially through the worst of our global health emergency.

- “On-demand” prescription, food, and healthcare services will remain in high demand.
- This shows “critical” needs have changing demand landscapes.
- This also suggests when critical needs arise in troubled times, people feel safer when technology serves as the platform.

The Institute’s Top Health Industry Issues of 2021 report states using a SaaS model “reduces the management burden associated with an ownership model” for platforms. This model also improves the business continuity.

- A shift to widely used options for video conferencing, like Zoom or Teams, makes it easier for patients to be seen.
- Chat is another great way to ensure patients are able to schedule care as needed.

Self-assessment is another tool that makes care easier for patients.

- Providing a checklist for many routine visits – like cold and flu concerns – helps patients get routine care and/or medications faster.
- It may be necessary to verify patient feedback and recommended care to patient health records.



4. What patients really want

When trouble hits, patients' wants and needs change almost immediately

Your facility's reputation with customers/ partners rides on performance.

- Partners want a reliable partner.
- Business Continuity Plans with robust disaster recovery services help return your HDO to operational in even the direst of circumstances.
- Having an external roadmap signals to customers you value patient data.
- When normalcy returns, customers remember you were a trusted, reliable, forthright partner.

Business Continuity provides a competitive advantage.

Consider how many of your closest competitors may have Business Continuity Plans.

- A Mercer study shows 51 percent of businesses do not have a Business Continuity Plan.
- A Business Continuity Plan should also be as thorough as possible.
- It's difficult to anticipate patient tolerance for disruptions. Details that seem trivial may be incredibly important to their care and satisfaction of your facility or services.
- Planning for every possible scenario means patients and staff are serviced and cared for with minimal disruption.

Support means you have allies.

Business Continuity should be designed with expert guidance. It's also best to allow outside partners to assist with the implementation of a Business Continuity Plan.

- This allows in-house stakeholders to focus on staff and other mission-critical issues.
- Support staff can quickly make plans actionable and communicate to all staff on any new protocols or reporting structures.



5. How to plan for disaster

The why, how, and who for crafting the best business continuity plans imaginable

“Why” is for planning.

You must consider every “why” scenario to craft thorough Business Continuity Plans.

- Planning ahead means getting ahead when disruption strikes.
- You may not need a unique plan for every possible issue that can cause business disruption, but you should consider each scenario and craft plans that cover all your needs.

“How” is for recovery.

Once you’ve identified sources of disruption, knowing how you’ll get back on track is the next step.

- Detailed plans help each stakeholder know what’s important in the right moment.
- Leadership understands who does what across the HDO.
- Established timeframes drive everyone toward goals.
- Communication channels establish a method for keeping everyone updated on next steps.

DOWNTIME IS NOT AN OPTION

- Server downtime means potential data loss while your business is at a standstill.
- Business continuity planning helps establish responsibilities and duties, keeping staff engaged and helping throughout.



5. How to plan for disaster

■ The why, how, and who for crafting the best business continuity plans imaginable

Finding a trusted, experienced partner like Ricoh to help create and implement a Business Continuity Plan means you have a trusted partner supporting you.

- When Ricoh needed to implement its own continuity plan, both on-site and remote employee engagement increased.

IT support staff allow your team to focus their attention where it's most needed.

- When business is disrupted, data security and access are top-of-mind for most in IT.

Business Continuity Plans from Ricoh are customizable.

- Your needs – and the needs of your customers – are the priority. Ricoh can help craft the perfect plan (or plans) that meet all needs and suit any budget.
- Ricoh consultants work closely with your HDO to help ideate on potential scenarios for disruption.
- The collaborative effort helps you understand your needs, and what the best business continuity options are for your specific requirements.



“Ricoh’s IT services remove the burden of monitoring and managing your data infrastructure to help give you increased reliability, reduced risk, and a comprehensive Business Continuity Plan in the event of a disaster.”

<https://www.ricoh-usa.com/en/services-and-solutions/cloud-it-services/it-service-desk-for-enterprise>



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