Risk Management: IT Disaster Recovery Planning

There are six main categories to consider when evaluating the alignment of a Disaster Recovery Plan with Business Continuity objectives. Working through a structured series of questions focused on areas of potential business process change can identify key improvement opportunities.

KEY COMPETENCIES & KNOWLEDGE

The impact to the IT Disaster Recovery Plan (IT DRP) of shifting roles, responsibilities, and availability of key personnel needs to be considered. There are specific roles and often specific people who are key to effective activation and execution of an IT DRP.

- Are critical resources or skill sets currently available and accessible?
- Do you have contingency plans with geographic diversity for alternate resources if the primary is unavailable?
- Have there been any changes to internal personnel for affected roles and have Disaster Recovery (DR) expectations been communicated to everyone involved?

FACILITIES

Internal and supplier physical access policies and employee work locations are changing. Some previously critical facilities may be more or less important with updated access and screening requirements.

- Have the Business Impact Assessments been updated to reflect changing facilities usage patterns?
- Are connectivity and bandwidth capabilities of current facilities adequate for effective DR plan execution?
- Have internal facility screenings or safety protocols been updated and communicated to key suppliers?
- Does the IT DRP align with hosting facility access, security, and screening policies?
- Do on-site and remote policies align with stay-at-home regulations?

TECHNOLOGY

Remote work, changing supply chains, and shifting transaction volumes will affect the relative importance and recovery time objectives of various business enabling technologies.

- Have the Business Impact Assessments been reviewed or revised to consider changing technology usage patterns? Previously non-key systems may now be critical.
- Have Recovery Time Objectives (RTO) and Recovery Point Objectives (RPO) by application and service been revised based on updated Risk Assessment and Business Impact Analysis service recovery prioritization?
- Have RTO or RPO changed and is there alignment to the Business and IT?
- Are current application and service licensing sufficient to meet DR process needs (e.g., applications, bandwidth, VPN, MDM, remote connectivity, and collaboration)?

DATA

Changing transaction volumes, work location, and internal policies may affect data, IT DR plan security, and regulatory compliance.

- Has the IT DRP been reviewed and updated to consider location or remote access policy changes?
- Are they aligned to the organization's privacy, security, and regulatory policies (e.g., internal policies, GDPR, CCPA, PCI)?CCPA, PCI)?
- Have IT DRPs been tested in the current business operating environment to verify recovery timing expectations considering potential data volume, geographic, or bandwidth changes?

PROCESSES

Updates to documented IT DR plan activation and recovery procedures are likely needed if there have been changes to critical resources, technology, facilities, or policy.

- If internal safety or communication policies have changed, is the IT DRP process aligned with the current policy?
- Have processes been reviewed and confirmed to accommodate remote execution (e.g., connectivity, security, bandwidth, collaboration)?
- Has the end-to-end process been tested in the current business operating environment?

SUPPLIERS

Some supply chains have been disrupted or delayed; IT DR plans should be reviewed to identify potential impacts.

- Has a supplier review or audit been conducted to confirm critical supplier capabilities and alignment with the IT DRP?
- Does the IT DRP identify and include mitigation for potential supply chain disruptions?

By examining your answers to the questions above you can gain initial visibility into the areas of greatest risk and opportunity.

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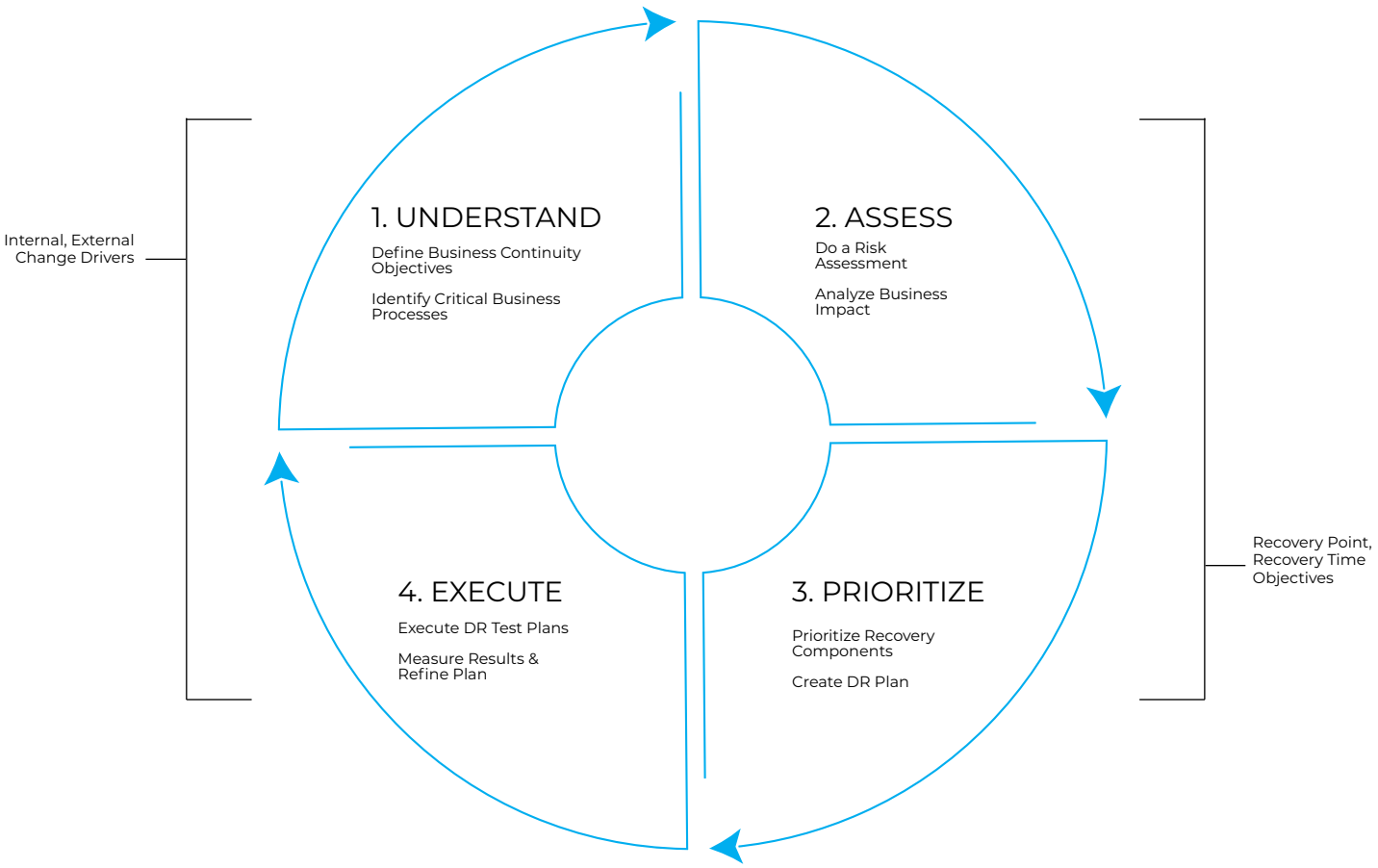
DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN READINESS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Changes in critical business processes lead to changes in Risk Assessments and Business Impact Analysis outcomes, which often require updates to the Disaster Recovery Plan. Consider how internal or external operating environment changes affect critical business processes and supporting IT systems.



1. **UNDERSTAND THE CHANGE**
Survey the external environment to identify changes that impact your business. Consider internal policy, work patterns, and personnel changes. Seemingly small changes can have significant impacts when long-held assumptions are no longer valid.

2. **ASSESS THE RISKS & QUANTIFY THE IMPACTS**
Map your critical business processes to the information and communication technology environment. Set Recovery Time and Recovery Point objectives for all systems supporting critical business processes and confirm expectations and alignment with key business unit leaders.

3. **PRIORITIZE RECOVERY STEPS**
Prioritize the recovery order of critical systems. Adjust the DR plan to accommodate changes in personnel, process, or policy. Identify and document contingency plans for areas of uncertainty.

4. **EXECUTE**
Test the plan in the current business operating environment. Confirm RTO and RPO targets are met. Confirm alignment with safety, communication, and regulatory policies. There will be gaps; document the gaps, refine the plan, align expectations, and repeat.

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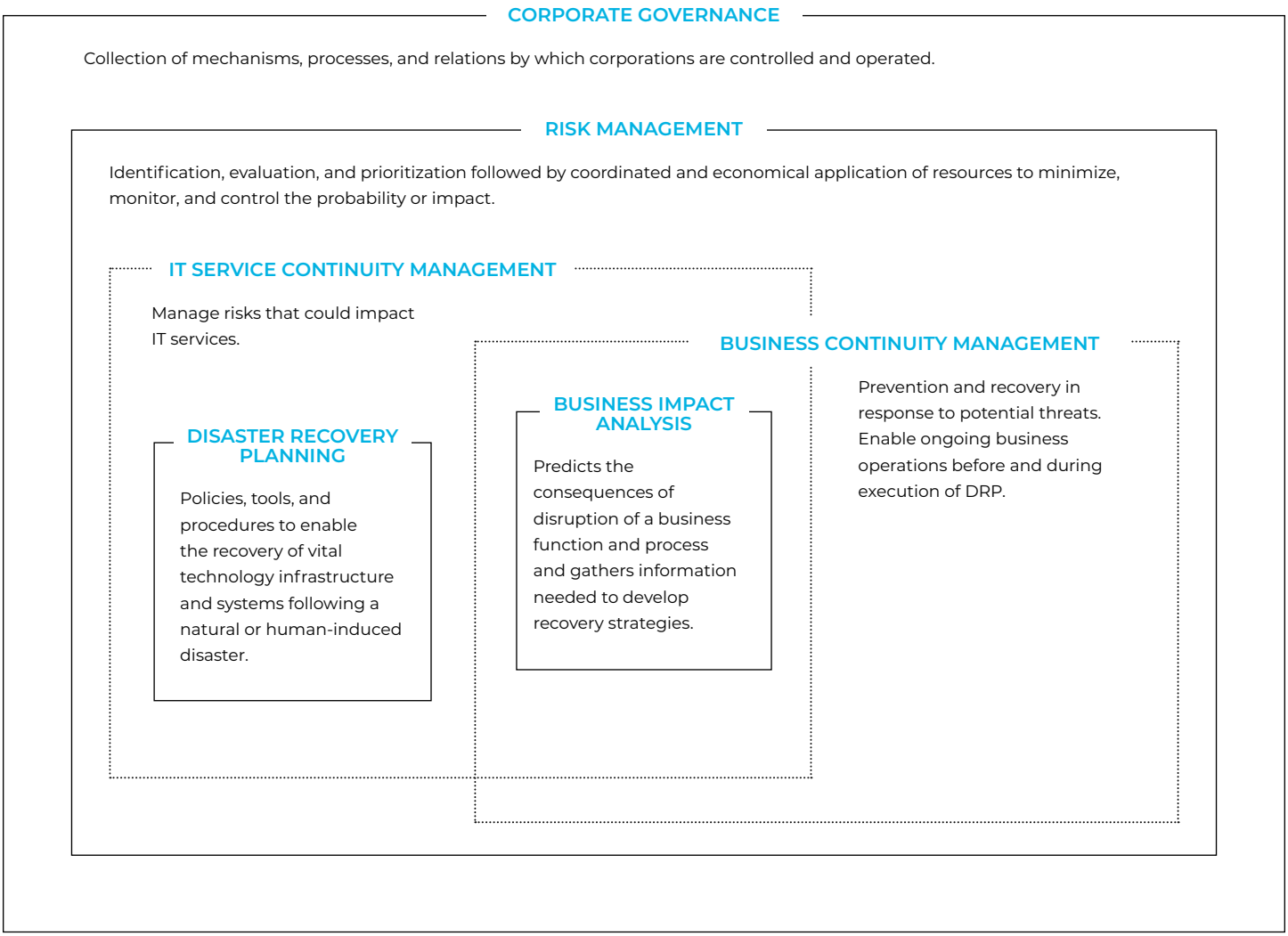
IT DISASTER RECOVERY PLANNING IN CONTEXT

Information and communication technology systems are critical for ongoing business operations. To confirm continued effectiveness and alignment with the Business Continuity Plan the IT Disaster Recovery Plan should be reviewed periodically and whenever there is a significant change in the business.



JABIAN IS HERE TO HELP

Organizations that have good risk management policies and procedures are proven to be more resilient. Jabian's Risk Management professionals can help facilitate identification, assessment, and action plan development. Depending on your need, Jabian provides solutions to:

Identify external change drivers affecting your business

Prioritize recovery options

Organize and manage crisis management teams

Establish best practice Risk Governance programs

If you are interested in learning more about how Jabian can help you align your Disaster Recovery Plan with the broader Business Continuity Plan and/or improve alignment between Business and IT, simply contact us at planahead@Jabian.com.

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